

# PRISONERS OF RUSSIA

UC-NRLF



\$B 383 916

BENJAMIN HOWARD

REESE LIBRARY  
OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA.

*Class*





Dr. Benjamin Howard.

# PRISONERS OF RUSSIA

A PERSONAL STUDY OF CONVICT LIFE  
IN SAKHALIN AND SIBERIA

BY

BENJAMIN HOWARD, M. A., M. D., F. R. C. S. E.

WITH A PREFACE BY  
BRIGADIER-GENERAL O. O. HOWARD, U. S. A. (RETIRED)

*ILLUSTRATED*



NEW YORK  
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY  
1902

HV6295  
R9 H8

# REESE

COPYRIGHT, 1902  
BY D. APPLETON AND COMPANY

*Published May, 1902*

## P R E F A C E

---

DR. BENJAMIN DOUGLAS HOWARD, who in this volume chronicles the results of a series of special and valuable studies of Siberian prison life, especially in the far-distant and almost unknown island prison of Sakhalin, was born at Chesham, Bucks, England, March 21, 1836. His father, Thomas Howard, was a manufacturer of woodenware, one of the staple trades of Chesham, an honourable man, and a Baptist of the straightest Calvinistic school, being a member of the Church of Townfield, Chesham. Thomas had five children—Mary, Samuel, Caroline, Benjamin, and Ephraim. His wife dying while the children were young, the father brought them up with a strictness bordering on severity. At his death, Benjamin and the younger brother Ephraim were cared for by their guardians, Mr. S. Stone and Mrs. Birch, of Blucher Street, Chesham, at whose house Benjamin lived. He attended the school of Mr. J. Boulden, where he evinced ability far beyond that of the other boys, his crayon sketches and

## Prisoners of Russia

paintings notably attracting attention by their excellence.

After he left school, his guardian wished to apprentice him to some kind of work that was very distasteful, so he left Chesham to carve out a different career for himself. For a time he worked at the trade of painter and paper-hanger in the town of Luton, Bedfordshire, but even then he was anxious to enter a university, for his first teaching in the Chesham school had only fitted him for commercial life. Not communicating this wish to those who would have willingly aided him to obtain a university scholarship, which he could have easily won, he, hearing about the year 1853 that the American colleges were accessible to such as he, embarked for New York.

After his arrival in America he worked at his trade in several cities for a livelihood, and with indomitable perseverance attended college classes. He was so determined to accomplish his object, which at that time was to become a medical missionary, that frequently, after a hard day's work, he sat up till sunrise, being at his desk until so overpowered by sleep that he would fasten his eyelids to his brow with mucilage paper.

Benjamin Howard had made up his mind to obtain a first-class education, and he seldom

## Preface

failed to accomplish the object on which he had set his heart. His classmate, Joseph D. Bartley, M. A., writes this of him in those days: "He became a member of the class entering Williams College 1855, at about the middle of its course. Some of its well-known members are now known as Rev. Washington Gladden, D. D., of Columbus, Ohio; Prof. E. B. Parsons, Secretary of the Williams Faculty; Rev. H. A. Schauffler, D. D., Cleveland, Ohio; Hon. S. G. W. Benjamin, formerly U. S. Minister to Persia. President Mark Hopkins, that prince of teachers, was in charge, and something of his manliness and gentle Christian character was impressed upon all who came under his beneficent influence.

"Dr. Howard, though of about the average age of his classmates, gave the impression of greater age and maturity. There was a certain quiet, dignity, modesty, self-possession, and moral earnestness that at once won our respect. He was an earnest student, and even then had such medical skill as to lead us to call in his services when needed. The writer well remembers the skilful treatment he received from Dr. Howard for a seriously sprained wrist, caused by a fall upon the ice. At Williams he gave full promise of the eminence he attained in later life."

## Prisoners of Russia

Being for some reason unable to continue at Williams for graduation, young Howard returned to New York, took up the study of medicine, and was graduated at the College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1858, receiving the degree of Doctor of Medicine. It was at this time that he made professional visits to houses that he had painted or papered when, a few years before, he was struggling for an education and working at his trade. In 1869 Williams College conferred upon him, in recognition of his scholarship and valuable medical services, the honorary degree of Master of Arts. Dr. Howard, in his will, left a legacy of one thousand dollars to Williams College to aid poor students.

His cherished desire to become a medical missionary sent him to Auburn (N. Y.) Theological Seminary for a time, but at last indifferent health caused him, with much reluctance, to abandon this project.

He naturally was much interested in our slavery discussions at this period, and was reading the publications of the day. Having been greatly impressed with Uncle Tom's Cabin, he determined to investigate for himself the practical workings of human slavery. For this purpose he went to St. Louis, Mo., and obtained employment as a clerk in a slave market. What he saw, including the customary paid admissions

## Preface

of young men about town to the quarters of the female slaves who were awaiting sale, so aroused his indignation and sympathy that he at once became an active agent of the "underground railway" to Canada. He did this while still a clerk at his desk in the slave market. Soon this double occupation was discovered. Then, being warned by a companion, he fled from Missouri, barely escaping with his life.

The war for the Union breaking out soon after the completion of his medical studies, Dr. Howard immediately volunteered his services to the Government as a surgeon, and was enrolled May 20, 1861, and mustered into service May 22d as assistant surgeon in the Nineteenth Regiment of New York Volunteers, afterward known as the Third New York Light Artillery. He was to have served two years, but meantime, having passed the very difficult examination, he was appointed, on August 28th of the same year, assistant surgeon in the regular army, and soon after attached to the staff of Major-General McClellan, commanding the Army of the Potomac.

Acting as an aide-de-camp, he visited my division during the battle of Antietam. In this, and in all the battles where he was present, Dr. Howard served faithfully and with gallantry. On one occasion, having captured a Confederate spy, he was able to convey to the commanding

## Prisoners of Russia

general such information as to aid materially in a victory for the Union forces.

He was at one time medical purveyor and acting medical director of the Department of the Ohio. It was while acting as senior operator to the regular troops in the Army of the Potomac, and while away from headquarters, that, after one of the severe engagements, he was captured by a strolling party of Confederates. Stripped by them of all his valuables, and even of his hat, he was made to march most of one day in the hot sun before he was released. This hardship brought on a partial sunstroke and nervous debility from which he never fully recovered, and it is wonderfully to his credit that he accomplished so much in the line of his profession as he did, with lasting benefits to humanity, in his greatly impaired condition. In spite of his physical troubles, he continued his military duties until the final investment of Petersburg, when he resigned and left the army, December 28, 1864.

Because of his large experience gained in the army during the civil war, Dr. Howard decided at first to practise medicine in New York city, making a specialty of surgery. In a very short time he obtained a large practice, being on every hand greatly respected and sought after. He was an indefatigable worker in practice and in

## Preface

pursuing his medical studies, making short trips to Europe for that purpose. It was at this time that the attention of the medical world at large was called to this modest and able practitioner, particularly through the appearance, in 1871, of a prize essay written by him for the American Medical Association, entitled The Direct Method of Artificial Respiration, or the Treatment of Persons apparently Dead from Suffocation by Drowning or from other Cause. This simplification of Marshall Hall's method for resuscitating persons seemingly drowned was the greatest service done for humanity by Dr. Howard. His method was immediately adopted in hand-books which were published by the general Government and by municipalities throughout the United States. Now every policeman is indebted to Dr. Howard for the simple instructions which have enabled him to aid the apparently drowned. An example of these simplifications was that Dr. Howard was the first to call attention to the fact that in nearly all cases persons are drowned with their clothes on, and that in attempts at resuscitation this clothing can be used in a bundle over which to lay the patient.

At this period of his life Dr. Howard was Lecturer on Operative Surgery in the Medical Department of the University of New York; Professor of Surgery and Surgeon in the Long

## Prisoners of Russia

Island College Hospital; Professor of Surgery elect in the Medical College at Cincinnati; and from 1872 to 1873 Professor of Obstetrics, and 1873-'75 Professor of Surgery, in the University of Vermont. He was also a Fellow of the New York Academy of Medicine. He rendered assistance to his profession by his many writings on medical subjects, a few of which were on the antiseptic treatment of gunshot wounds of the chest by hermetically sealing; a new method of treating hip-joint disease; removal of several bullets from deep substance of the brain; on an army ambulance wagon with interior springs, awarded first prize and medal at the Paris International Exposition; a prize essay on Treatment of Aneurism and the Ligature of Arteries; a prize essay on a ready method of artificial respiration; and on apparatus for demonstrating the anatomy and treatment of hernia.

In 1875 Dr. Howard left New York to recruit, if possible, his health by a prolonged stay in Europe, Asia, and Africa. At first he spent two or three years in leisure work in Vienna and Paris. In France he was able to obtain an interview with the Emperor, and to suggest the use of his ambulance, which has been of acknowledged service in the French army. This ambulance invented by Dr. Howard was of lower construction than those then in use, having interior

## Preface

springs under the litter, which was easily taken in and out, and thus transferred a patient with greater comfort. Dr. Howard also called the attention of the Paris authorities to the necessity of a street ambulance service for that city. Soon after this such service was instituted, founded on the practice in American cities.

Returning to England, Dr. Howard was for a time induced to take up his residence in London, but, as a close friend has remarked, his career was more meteor-like than planetary, and, though he did stay a few years in London, he nevertheless spent most of his time in travel and research. While there he became a member of several clubs like the Savoy and St. George's in Hanover Square, and was well acquainted with the medical profession generally. Being unmarried, he made his home in London at the Langham Hotel, Charing Cross, preferring to be at liberty to go and come as he pleased.

Desiring an English degree as well as those of America, he read up while at the Langham Hotel, passed the examinations in 1888, and was awarded the degree of Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh (F. R. C. S. E.). While in London he read a paper on anatomical discoveries made by him in connection with the epiglottis, which was published in the transactions of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical So-

## Prisoners of Russia

society of London. About this time he became a close friend of Sir William McKenzie, the eminent throat specialist, and was made also a Fellow of his society.

London having no ambulance service for its hospitals other than that provided by the Order of St. John for hire, Dr. Howard was so impressed with this necessity that he agitated the subject for several months, inventing a horse ambulance especially for London street work. Mentioning this one day to a fellow-passenger in a train, he found him to be Mr. Crossman, vice-chairman of a committee of London hospitals, who entered into his plans most thoroughly, and presented one of Dr. Howard's ambulances to this committee. This was the first ambulance used from a London hospital to pick up accident cases from the streets.

Finally, on February 2, 1882, a meeting was held, presided over by His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge, to consider the advisability of an accident-ambulance service for London. A resolution to that effect was passed which was earnestly supported by Dr. Howard, and a committee formed to further the organization.

From this beginning the ambulance service was soon started, with a partial acceptance of Dr. Howard's carriage. The present splendid service in London is the result. So that Dr.

## Preface

Howard has received the credit of being the originator, and largely the organizer, of the London Ambulance Service. This is an incident of this philanthropist's desire, he being a keen observer of all surroundings, to suggest means for the amelioration of suffering. It is said that this was the first horse ambulance service used in civil life in any part of Europe.

During this period Dr. Howard was engaged as one of the authors of Quain's Dictionary of Medicine. Also, by invitation, he lectured at Guy's Hospital, in St. Bartholomew's, and in St. Thomas's, connected with the medical colleges of London, as well as at the hospitals of La Pitié and the Salpêtrière of Paris. Dr. Howard did not practise regularly in London, but received patients by appointment, while for a season he was the medical examiner for applicants to the Royal Friendly Society.

Dr. Howard says in his writings that since 1859 he had become interested in the different convict systems in the world, the study of criminology and prison reform. And so, beginning with 1888, he began to travel considerably for the purpose of making thorough investigations of these subjects. He went through the principal prisons of England, Germany, and the United States, and through every convict prison between St. Petersburg and Siberia; in Russia

## Prisoners of Russia

he travelled many hundred miles in hourly contact with over five hundred exiles by road, river, and rail. He made practical studies of the Armenians' troubles in their midst. He went again and again into the Russian Jew question, and was twice put under arrest, utterly uncertain as to what might await him.

In 1891 the London Lancet published an article from his pen—One Hundred Lashes with the Knout—which caused a sensation and was copiously copied into the principal provincial papers.

Notwithstanding the acknowledged severity of this punishment, which the Doctor discovered was given only in the most extreme cases, generally those of repeated murder, he was thoroughly impressed with the fairness of the Russian prison system, and he gives in this book a description of this flogging, with his conclusions regarding the Russian as compared with our own ruinous, solitary-confinement method of treating criminals. This book reveals that phase of the life of Dr. Howard, and the reader will find it interesting as an addition to the study of criminology. He had marvellous insight into character, and his good humour and adroitness, combined with self-assertion, enabled him to pass into social positions and official connections where others would have been repulsed. His able and inter-

## Preface

esting book following this sketch is a revelation of this success.

On July 19, 1890, he wrote from Korea: "I have spent a month in Italy, over three months in India, travelling over three thousand miles there, striking Mongolians, then to Ceylon and China, thence the whole length of Japan, living as the natives in the far interior. Am now in this strange region of Korea, leaving to-morrow for Siberia, and expecting to reach the extreme northeast, whence perhaps Kamchatka. My first Russian port will be Vladivostok, after that I may have some exceptional experiences." Which proved true enough, as the reader will find.

It was at this time that Dr. Howard, known to be a scientist and not belonging to any organization for the propagation of Christianity, was requested to deliver a lecture before members of the Imperial Institute in Tokio, Japan, on the subject of The Christ judged by Scientific Method.

From the larger audience a small number of Japanese students requested further information, so that Dr. Howard took them to an inner room of the university, and it has since transpired that many, then hearing of Christ for the first time, were convinced and made public confession of their belief in him.

## Prisoners of Russia

Being at Vladivostok a little later, he met the governor of the island of Sakhalin, who invited him to make a visit to his prison home. Dr. Howard joyfully grasped this opportunity, for which he had long waited, and has given it all in the following pages, except his unique visit and life for two weeks among the strange natives of that island, which he published in a separate volume entitled *Life Among the Trans-Siberian Savages*.

After all these experiences, which have fallen to the lot of few men, and after recovering from the accident of a terrible shipwreck in Japan, he returned to England in 1896, and wrote to a friend: "Now I am finished and never mean to run any risks again." He soon after came to America and took apartments in New York, which he had always enjoyed because of the many friends of earlier days. There I met him again in 1898. Never, as we have seen, of robust health, the active life had begun to wear more and more upon him; his suffering from neurasthenia was hard to bear. Unknown to his intimates, he was weakened by an affection of the liver, which became acute in the spring of 1900, and of which he died, June 27th, at the summer home of his friend, the eminent Dr. Andrew H. Smith, who had removed him to Elberon, N. J., from the Presbyterian Hospital shortly before

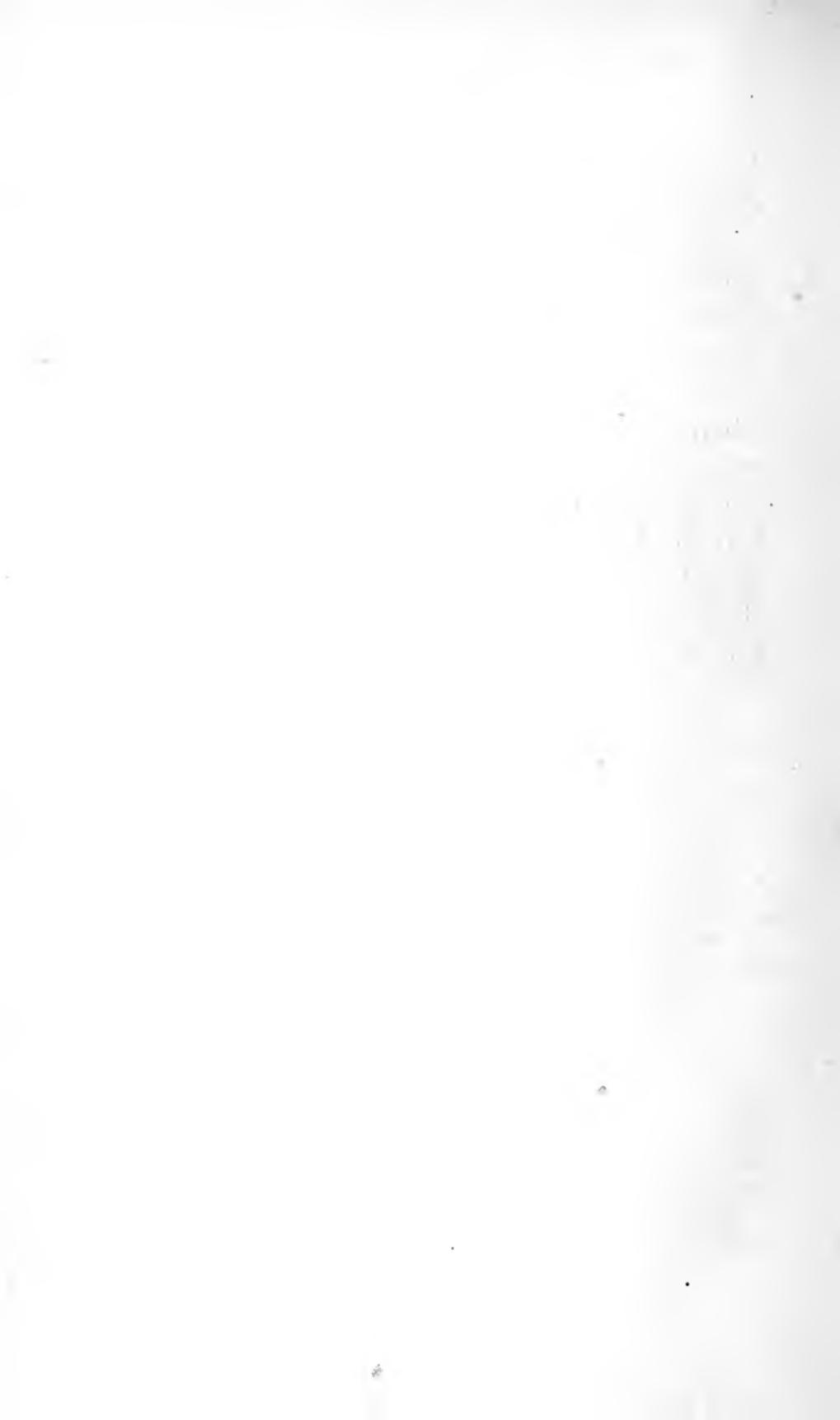
## Preface

his death. He was laid to rest, at his own request, in the quiet cemetery there.

Dr. Howard and I could not trace our relationship, yet he was often taken for me, and sometimes by those who knew one or the other of us quite well. I shall be glad to be like him—patient, submissive, cheerful, and Christian—when my last days draw near as his were doing when I visited him a few times just before his departure. His faith and trust in the Master he had so very diligently followed were simple and complete. Who ever through his entire career showed a stronger love for the Lord his God and for his fellow-men?

O. O. HOWARD,

*Major-General, U. S. A.*





## INTRODUCTION

---

THANKS to some excellent books on Siberian travel, the topography of continental Siberia is now so well known that anything further on that topic might be regarded as superfluous. Respecting the Russian penal exile system, however, there is still no little ignorance and confusion, and not without reason.

The traveller with no previous acquaintance with the language, whose projected visits are telegraphed before he starts to the governor of every prison to whom he is accredited on his intended route, labours unavoidably under many disadvantages. The toil of completing his harassing journey within perhaps a very limited time is in itself an exhausting occupation. The half-hour exhibitions prepared for him at each of these prisons, scattered hundreds of miles apart, may have been duly made; the stories of certain exiles and prisoners as retailed by an interpreter may have been duly incorporated with his really authentic experiences for future use, but the daily routine of the ordinary actual life of prison-

## Prisoners of Russia

ers and exiles, in prison and out of prison, when no traveller is near; the ordinary methods and life of the officials; the actual working of the system in its different details and departments—these may be as unknown to this traveller at the end of his trip as when he started. Of these things seen from the inside, the English-speaking public is still practically ignorant.

In illustration of one of these points, I may perhaps venture to remark that it was the special mission of Mr. Kennan to investigate in particular the alleged cruelties incident to the exile system. Yet, notwithstanding the thrilling accounts his rare art and enterprise have furnished, my repeated searches throughout his book for a case I might quote in which he himself witnessed a flogging, or any act of personal violence by an official, have, to my great surprise, remained fruitless: I have not been able to find a single instance. Few people, however, doubt but that such incidents frequently occur just where Mr. Kennan was, though he did not see them.

Of my four series of visits to Russian and Siberian prisons made between 1887 and 1897, I purpose to say practically nothing in this book. My Life with Trans-Siberian Savages was the first work on that country by any foreigner who had visited it, and treated of the animus there.

## Introduction

The present book is confined to the exile life there from an inside point of view, as known only by officials.

The nature of the special experience here related is less a matter of merit than of accident. In no other way could it have possibly come about, as the slightest betrayal of design, or eagerness on my part, to see what I have described would at the start have defeated any such purpose. This experience consisted of an actual residence in a penal exile settlement, during which I was the companion of the governor in all his inspection tours far and near.

From the inside or official standpoint I saw everything the governor saw. While each official was supposed to see only what occurred in his own department, I became familiar with all the departments alike in their innermost working. This applies not only to the postal inspections, the Court of Justice, and the Police Department, but even to the special punishments about which the secrecy observed is greater than about any other penal event whatever. At each of the floggings which occurred during my residence on Sakhalin, the culprits were examined by me personally before, during, and after the execution of the sentence.

The exiles themselves, I think, regarded me as their friend, and thus I came to know many

## Prisoners of Russia

things from their point of view, which were carefully concealed from every ordinary official.

As a penal settlement, the place in which I resided was of uncommon interest. The island of Sakhalin is to continental Siberia something worse than what Siberia is to the rest of Russia. Its alleged cruelties are much more notorious. Sakhalin is the penal region which is most distant from St. Petersburg; Korsakoffsk is its most distant settlement, and therefore the most distant penal settlement within the Russian Empire. The dreadful reputation of the place and the fear of it are proportionate to its distance.

The period of my residence in Korsakoffsk was within the time when, even more than now, those sent there were almost exclusively double murderers, or such politicals as were considered equally dangerous. They included chiefly such assassins and brigands as the various prisoners of continental Siberia had been unable to hold, and who therefore were sent to this island prison for safe-keeping. Sakhalin more than any other penal region is still regarded as inevitably the grave of everybody sent there. The knout and other punishments, long since abolished everywhere else, are here still retained and practised in fullest force.

I need hardly say that for a foreigner my experience was exceptional. I believe that it was

## Introduction

unique. Indeed, several of the officials in Korsakoffsk told me that, previous to my coming, no foreigner had ever been known to pass a single night there. From information recently received I conclude that this holds good to this day.

Some of the reviews of my first book on Sakhalin \* contained various surmises as to my silence in its pages about the exile question. On this point I will now for the first time say that, whatever were the reasons for this reticence, they were entirely self-imposed then, and do not exist at all now. At the present moment I enjoy an honourable and absolute freedom to state the truth and the whole truth as to all facts which came within my own personal knowledge.

When returning from a more recent trip, a few months since, I learned at Moscow that, in accordance with the five-year time limit of the governmental term of service in Sakhalin, a change of the entire roster of the officials I knew in Korsakoffsk had then been completed.

Should these pages meet the eye of any of these gentlemen, I am sure that he will admit the impartiality with which I have presented facts, even though he may differ from me as to some of my conclusions.

---

\* Life with Trans-Siberian Savages. Longmans & Co., London and New York, 1893.

## **Prisoners of Russia**

My photographic views, I regret to say, went down and were lost in the little Japanese trader which I chartered to take me from Sakhalin to explore the island of Yezo in Japan.

**BENJAMIN HOWARD.**

## C O N T E N T S

---

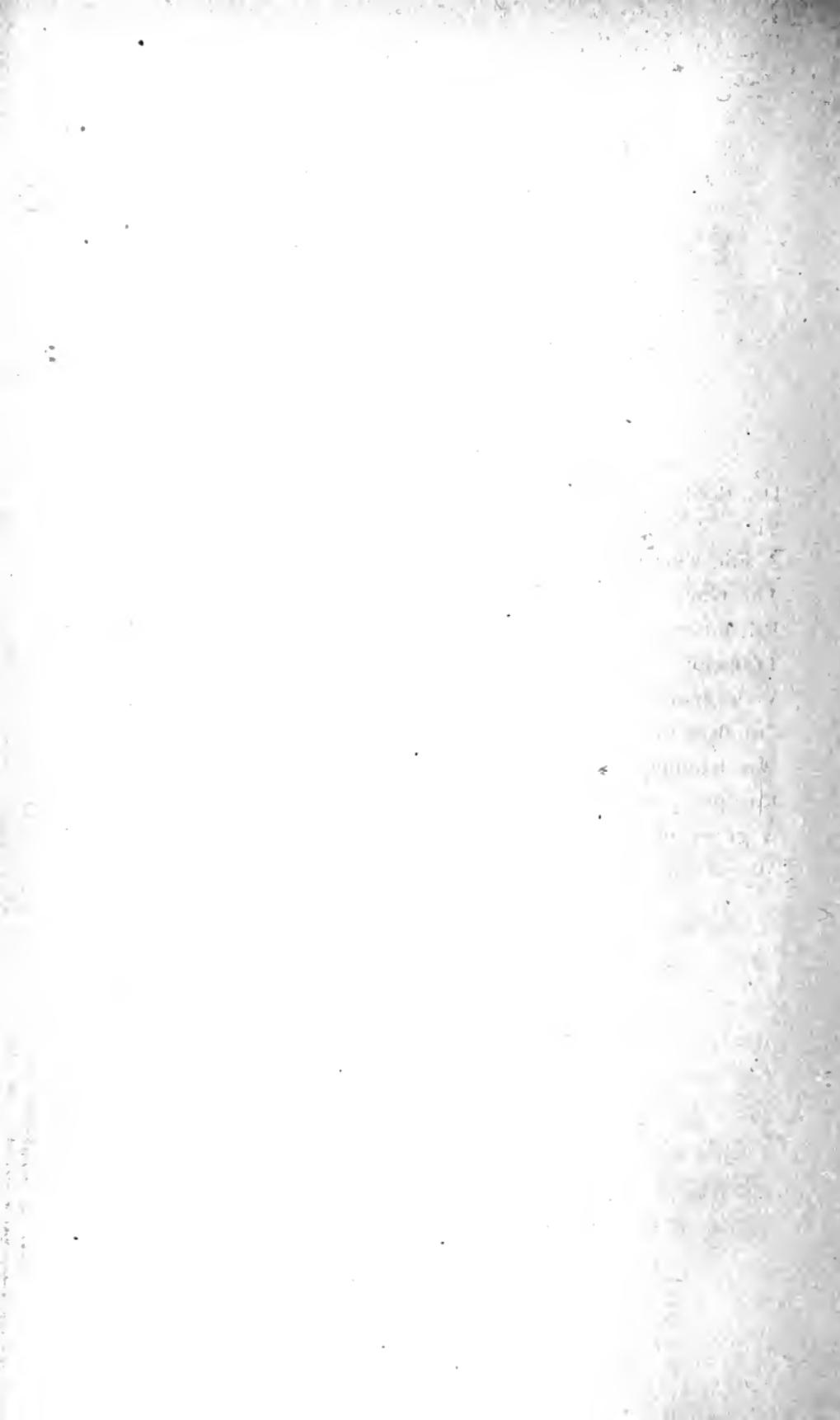
CHAPTER	PAGE
I. VLADIVOSTOK . . . . .	I
II. THE VLADIVOSTOK PRISON . . . . .	15
III. TO SAKHALIN . . . . .	41
IV. THE REPUTATION OF SAKHALIN . . . . .	57
V. KORSAKOFFSK WAYS . . . . .	69
VI. MY FIRST SUNDAY IN KORSAKOFFSK . . . . .	92
VII. THE KORSAKOFFSK PRISON . . . . .	111
VIII. THE FOOD OF THE EXILES . . . . .	130
IX. THE OCCUPATIONS OF EXILES . . . . .	138
X. WOMEN EXILES, MARRIAGE PROBLEMS, AND COLONIZATION . . . . .	155
XI. THE KNOUT, ITS USE AND EFFECTS . . . . .	180
XII. LIFE OF THE OFFICIALS—DANGERS OF CRUELTY	209
XIII. BAPTISM OF EXILE CHILDREN—THE BLESSING OF THE WATERS . . . . .	224
XIV. PRIVATE WALKS AND TALKS IN KORSAKOFFSK	236
XV. THE HOSPITAL . . . . .	247
XVI. THE PHYSIOGNOMY OF MURDERERS—REMORSE	259
XVII. THE QUESTION OF REFORMATION . . . . .	276
XVIII. THE GEOGRAPHY AND NATURAL RESOURCES OF SAKHALIN . . . . .	289
XIX. A GENERAL VIEW OF THE SIBERIAN PENAL SYSTEM—ITS AIM . . . . .	329
XX. THE ANGLO-AMERICAN AND SIBERIAN PENAL SYSTEMS—CONTRASTS . . . . .	338
XXI. THE UNIVERSAL APPLICATION OF THE SIBERIAN SYSTEM . . . . .	354
XXII. FROM SAKHALIN TO YEZO . . . . .	359



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

---

	FACING PAGE
Dr. Benjamin Howard . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
View of Vladivostok, looking southwest . . . . .	6
A mid-winter mail train in Sakhalin . . . . .	60
The Governor's house, Korsakoffsk . . . . .	86
Prisoners under guard . . . . .	124
Transporting bricks . . . . .	152
View near Alexandrovsk, Sakhalin . . . . .	214
Convicts in hospital . . . . .	250
Woodchoppers returning from work . . . . .	298
Entrance to the Vladimirsk mine . . . . .	316
A group of Sakhalin miners and their families . .	334
Matsui Sau and Dr. Howard . . . . .	364





# PRISONERS OF RUSSIA

---

## CHAPTER I

### VLADIVOSTOK

RECKONING from St. Petersburg, the country of which I have chiefly to write is the most distant penal district within the Russian Empire, and the post at which I resided the most distant settlement within its boundaries.

Of the better-known books of Siberian travel, that of Mr. Kennan takes the reader as far as Nertchinsk; while that of the Rev. Mr. Lansdell carries him about two thousand miles farther, to Vladivostok, beyond which he tried to go, but, like others before him, found it impracticable. It is here, where Mr. Lansdell's account ends, that mine begins. In view of the increasing interest in Vladivostok, however, I allow my account to overlap, in this regard only, that of the authors who have preceded me.

I arrived at Vladivostok, which in this book I take as our starting point, very early on a July morning, and, after looking through each of its three taverns euphemistically called hotels, se-

## Prisoners of Russia

lected the best room available at the Hotel Tissier, not only because it had a better situation than either of the others, but also because, from what I could gather, it had a better reputation with the more intelligent classes of Russian society.

I found that the Hotel Tissier, like many other houses and things in Vladivostok, though fundamentally Russian, was largely German, slightly French, and considerably American. It is a two-story structure, with a balcony on the second story fronting on the unpaved street, the back part being so built into the steep hill behind it that the ground floor in the rear becomes the second floor in front. Like all the other buildings in the town, it is entirely of wood, the exterior painted a dead white except the blinds or shutters, most of which are green, as is seen so generally in New England.

The rooms on the ground floor are separated from each other only by archways. They are rudely furnished, and are used respectively as bar, restaurant, and billiard-room, as much by the general public as by the ten or fifteen guests of the house. They form its main entrance, unless one chooses to use a little back-garden gate on the hillside in the rear. At the side of the house, under an awning, are little tables in the continental fashion, forming a beer-garden

## Vladivostok

which is a favourite resort of the hotel people at about the time when the guests want to go to bed, the hilarity usually reaching its height when the sleepless visitors begin to think of getting up.

As the liquid refreshments sold at this distant place are for the most part brought all the way from France and Germany, and the cost of each libation averages about twenty-five cents, I inferred that the residents could not be suffering very severely from poverty.

In the liberality of its convivial habits, Vladivostok reminded me of some of the Colorado and California mining towns. I attributed it to the fact that Vladivostok is the last and only seaport town on this side of the north pole where this sort of diversion can be indulged in. The metropolis of the Primorsk was evidently prepared to meet the demand for its staple commodity.

The most notable and interesting factor in the Hotel Tissier was Tissier himself. By birth a Greek, he was a Russian by adoption. Not a country did I mention but he had been in it. Italian he had picked up in Italy, French in France; his American, which was very pronounced, he had acquired in California, his Scotch in Glasgow. He seemed to have tried his hand at almost everything. Shipwrecked a

## Prisoners of Russia

few years previously in the Okhotsk Sea, he had drifted about for forty-eight hours with two other survivors in an open boat. When this was sighted by a passing sail, Tissier was the only man of the party who was not quite dead. Stranded at Vladivostok, he took the management of a small tavern, and, being now pretty well cured of his thirst for adventure, he stuck to his business and built his hotel.

Alert and amiable, shrewd, yet generous, he took a joyous delight in promoting the happiness of his guests. On this farther edge of the world the newly arrived visitor, wherever he came from, was greeted cordially in his own tongue, and quickly made to feel that at the Hotel Tissier he was not far from home.

Alas for Tissier! Alas still more for Mme. Tissier! The night before I left the hotel he talked for some time with me in the confidential way people reserve for only a sympathetic listener. I had bid him good-night, and was half-way up the stairs, when he came running back and half whispered in his best California dialect, which he affected when in his specially friendly moods, this postscript: "Yes, it's all very true what you have just said—I've got a good stand. Yes, that's a fact, and I'm all nicely fixed; yes, you can bet your bottom dollar on that, but, you

## Vladivostok

see, I'm too well fixed—that's so. I'm so comfortable that I tell you it's getting darn'd tedious, that's what's the matter!"

Of the two rooms I had found vacant on my arrival, my choice depended on the fact that in the one case I should have to pass through the room of my neighbour, while in the other case he would have to pass through mine; so out of regard for the feelings of this as yet prospective personage I took the end one, notwithstanding the abominable dung-heap which was on a level with my windows, overlooking the little back garden of wild flowers and weeds.

The situation of Vladivostok is just sufficiently picturesque to be fruitful of inconveniences. With the exception of one straggling street leading to the only pass through the mountains in the rear to the main Siberian road, the town consists chiefly of a single, long, unpaved street, cut into the face of the hillside, parallel with the shore, from which the acclivity continues to the top of the high range of hills immediately behind it, strongly suggestive of Ventnor in the Isle of Wight.

Along the upper side of this street are houses at irregular intervals, including the three taverns, also three very large general stores, thoroughly American, but owned by Germans, in which you can buy a spool of thread, negotiate

## Prisoners of Russia

for a whole ship's cargo, or get a draft cashed on any well-known bank in Europe.

At the north end, just beyond the Hotel Tissier, on a commanding eminence, stands the newly built and imposing Greek church, and at the extreme opposite end is the prison.

On the lower side of the street, sloping towards the harbour, is the residence of the mayor and governor, also the pretty little Naval Club; but these are built so low into the bank as not to obstruct the view of the beautiful harbour from the street above them.

On some lower-lying land beyond the church, and out of sight from the main street, are the hospital, the avenue, and the Government workshops, including the navy yard, repairing docks, and everything forming a complete naval station. This is the most thoroughly protected part of the harbour.

My first impression of the supposed security of Vladivostok, from a military point of view, was not confirmed by a careful later examination.

The forts, which wisely enough are earthworks, and which command the narrow entrance to the harbour on the left as ships approach it, are built on a very long, sandy promontory, which is so narrow that one could fire right across it with a navy revolver. This is all there



View of Vladivostok, looking southwest.



## Vladivostok

is to separate the harbour and the town from a large and deep bay, which, on the south, indents the coast very near to Vladivostok. Accordingly, in case of war, the town and harbour would be open to bombardment by gun-boats in front and in flank across the strip of land, while troops could simultaneously be landed about three miles to the south, whence, by a fairly good road which exists, they might attack the town directly in the rear.

I should have been greatly surprised if I had not learned, as I did afterward from some Russian officers who spoke with delightful frankness on the subject, that this gross military defect in the site of Vladivostok had not only brought severe censure upon the officers who had selected it, but that even after the town had been fairly built, there had been a strong inclination to shift it to the opposite side of the harbour.

The weakness of the present site is precisely the same as that which would have been fatal to Sebastopol after the Alma, and is beyond remedy.

On reconnoitring the country to the rear of the town, however, I found that on the route I have mentioned troops were at the time hard at work erecting earthworks on nearly every neighbouring hilltop. Still, having been actively en-

## Prisoners of Russia

gaged in three sieges, I ventured to express the opinion that a few days' bombardment would demonstrate that in its present site Vladivostok is untenable.

I made my personal examination of the position undisguised and openly. Several times I have been asked how I managed to do it. I can only reply that I didn't manage it at all; I simply did it. Without permission or remark I walked from my hotel along the route in which I felt an interest, taking some care, perhaps, not to appear unduly concerned where my interest was greatest. I sauntered by the companies of various regiments, and saw their rifle practice with targets and dummy figures, their bayonet practice, and their company and regimental drill.

As the road which I have mentioned is the only one in this direction, I needs followed it on my return, passing various soldiers and officers, who appeared to have no more idea of interfering with me than I had of arresting them. I was quite content to have it so, as I had not even a passport with me; hence, in the other event, I might have suffered considerable inconvenience.

Fresh from this experience, I found no little amusement in a conversation which I overheard that very evening between two travellers at the

## Vladivostok

hotel. They told of various foreigners who had been reckless enough to wander alone beyond the city limits, and had suffered the usual consequence of imprisonment as spies during the long period which was required to establish their innocence. Considering that these stories were being told in the very town where the alleged incidents were said to have occurred, they struck me as fair samples of inaccuracy. What they might grow to be by the time they should reach England or America it is impossible to calculate.

It is not often that a traveller finds himself in a seaport town which is new, where almost every house is still glistening in its first coat of paint; yet the interest it had for me lay not so much in the newness as in the future of this place, which bears a name meaning "the Lord of the East."

As is usual in a new town, the optimists preponderate among the seers and prophets in Vladivostok.

The beauty of its site, every part of which looks down upon the beautiful harbour and across the bay of the Golden Horn to the Sea of Japan, the clearness of its atmosphere, and the supposed coolness of its summer climate, have caused it to receive some attention as a prospective summer resort for debilitated Euro-

## Prisoners of Russia

peans from India, China, and other parts of the Far Orient.

Though this harbour is ice-bound for many months in the winter, during several nights I found myself promenading my bed-room with my head tied up in an old muslin curtain as a protection against the hosts of virulent mosquitoes, the thermometer in the daytime registering  $78^{\circ}$  Fahr. in the shade. Strange as it may seem, the residents themselves regard the summer season as the most disagreeable part of the year.

In connection with the future commercial prospects of Vladivostok, it is of interest to note that, excepting only Hakodate, it is the only safe and available harbour along the entire stretch of coast between the Yellow Sea and the north pole. This harbour affords facilities for vessels of every class, its depth at its entrance being from sixty to a hundred and twenty feet, and at its shallowest parts from thirty to sixty feet.

During the summer this port is visited by one or two war-ships from the Asiatic squadrons of various nations. It is the arrival and departure of these which mark the principal social events, and also the fluctuations in the market prices of provisions and local commodities.

## Vladivostok

Besides the war-ships, from sixty to seventy merchant vessels visit Vladivostok during the summer, and these, with the men-of-war, Chinese and Japanese junks, and one or more local steamers in the harbour, form, in the height of the season, a lively contrast to the monotonous dulness of the rest of the year.

The civilian population, which is ever-varying, consists of a rare conglomeration of nationalities, including Germans, Finns, Swedes, Americans, Koreans, and Chinamen, but only one Englishman. Stranger still, the trade of the place is managed without the help of a single Scotchman. The larger merchants and the clerks they employ are almost exclusively German, and those of them I met seemed strikingly enterprising, courteous, and efficient.

Apart from these, the preponderating element is altogether formed by the Russian officials. Almost every person I met, indeed, was an officer either in the army, navy, or civil service; and of these not a few, I was told, had been ordered on duty out here as a mild sort of punishment or reprimand.

Two of the regimental companies I saw on parade in Vladivostok struck me, in their uniformly superb physique, as equal to the English Life Guards or any troops I ever saw anywhere. On inquiry I learned that every man of them

## Prisoners of Russia

was a native of Siberia, and took particular pride in the fact.

What the exports of the place were it was not easy to discover, but the imports included almost every article in use, and, according to official statements, they represented an amount more than twenty times the value of the exports.

As compared with other Siberian towns, nothing struck me so forcibly in Vladivostok as the superior air of intelligence and freedom of the people, which again, even more than the appearance of the buildings, was suggestive of a town in western America. When I remarked on this to a prominent merchant, he replied with boyish hilarity, "Ah! you see, we are so far from St. Petersburg that we do pretty much as we like here."

During my stay in the town, once, and once only, did I see a resident lady in the street, and her costume was strictly Siberian in its unattractiveness.

Among the public institutions of Vladivostok I found those of an educational and a religious nature to be of a decidedly favourable character. The imposing size of the new church building fairly expresses the sanguine nature of local expectations. There was another church also, which had recently been erected. This

## Vladivostok

second house of worship, which is Lutheran, has also a house for its resident clergyman, who is paid by the Government, as chaplain to the Lutheran soldiers, and is one of only four or five Protestant clergymen in all Siberia. This clergyman was absent visiting military and other communicants at different stations farther north at the time of my visit, but some time afterward I met him in Sakhalin, and was much pleased to see the great respect and generous hospitality with which he was treated by the highest officials. He was a capital specimen of the muscular Christian type; and this he needed to be, as his tour of visitations, he told me, included an area of about two thousand miles.

The charity organization society, I was informed, was in active working order, and in a minor degree extended its operations to prisoners. Besides two free schools, there is an excellent girls' boarding-school, and others exclusively for the daughters of officers. The most important of the educational institutions in the place, however, is the Boys' Gymnasium, which is directly connected with the higher-class Government schools throughout the Empire. In the upper grades of this school all the pupils are obliged to learn English, and are fully prepared to enter upon professional studies in any of the Russian universities.

## Prisoners of Russia

The telegraph stations are a matter of conspicuous interest in Vladivostok. From one of them you can send a message to London via Siberia, and from the other by the Great Northern Telegraph Company via Hakodate, Nagasaki, Shanghai, India, and Suez. The business is about equally divided between the two lines. On the Siberian system one wire is reserved exclusively for international messages, about two-thirds of which are in English.

As fairly illustrative of the high salaries usually paid to European clerks in the Asiatic branches of European establishments, it may be mentioned that in the English station here a telegraph clerk begins with over three hundred pounds a year, while in the Russian service a corresponding clerk, being a Russian, begins with less than fifty.

The great fact which is to be the starting point of a new era in Vladivostok, and which at the time of my visit was the supreme topic of conversation, is the trans-Siberian railway, of which the town is to be the most easterly Asiatic terminus, and Port Arthur, for the present, the most southerly. This railroad is expected to affect immensely the trade of Vladivostok, the penal administration throughout Siberia, and also international commerce.

## CHAPTER II

### THE VLADIVOSTOK PRISON

My first and greatest interest here, as in other Siberian towns, was in the prisoners and their treatment.

According to the republican spirit which, in contrast to the rest of Siberia, seems to prevail in Vladivostok, no questions had been asked me about my passport on the day of my arrival. As the best way of forming an acquaintance with the prison officials, however, I presented it in person to the Chief of Police, and paid my respects to him at the same time. Though he was at first severely formal, his interest heightened into evident amusement as he glanced over the document, which was already so covered with stamps and *visés* as to leave no space for the important addition of his own. After looking at it carefully, he gradually relaxed, and calling for "Passgros," courteously requested me to smoke a cigarette with him.

The same evening, while I was at dinner, the waiter handed me a card with an unusual

## Prisoners of Russia

amount of deference. It was that of the Chief of Police, who promptly appeared in full official regalia and as dapper as a toy soldier. I was fortunately alone, and he was kind enough to join me at dessert, during which his affability was delightful.

Not unnaturally he asked me a great many questions, while I was careful to ask very few, and to assume an air of respectful indifference to everything except what concerned his own comfort. It was evident that he had not yet recovered from his amazement at my passport, and at what he called my wonderful travels. He seemed still more surprised when I informed him that I represented nothing and nobody but myself, that I was neither a journalist nor an author, and would never aspire to be either the one or the other—a statement which was quite true at the time I made it. I told him that from early boyhood I had indulged in the notion that, finding myself in this world, I ought not willingly to go to another until I had thoroughly seen and studied it; that I had long felt that to have a sympathetic comprehension of the different forms of barbarism, religion, and civilization, it was of the first importance to have lived with the peoples among which they were respectively found; and that, simply for my own education, I had been most of the time pursuing this

## The Vladivostok Prison

course in a leisurely manner during the last twenty years. Therefore, as I had visited most of the other more distant parts of the Russian Empire, I had now come to see for myself the latest example of Russian progress as exhibited in the Primorsk, my farthest objective point being distant Yezo, which island I hoped to explore from north to south. The conclusion to which he accordingly came, and which he did not hesitate to express, was that I must be a very wealthy as well as a very fortunate man.

At the last moment he reached the question for which I was waiting, "How can I be of any use to you in Vladivostok?" And above all, "Would you care to visit the prisons?"

To this last proposition I slowly assented, and before we parted an appointment was made for this purpose for the very next morning.

In negotiating for such an early visit, I had in view the forestalling of any preparation of the prison for my benefit, and thus insuring an acquaintance with it in its ordinary condition.

I felt a special interest in this prison, knowing it to be in one respect unique among all the prisons of Siberia.

As is known to all readers of the literature on the subject, Vladivostok is the one and only loophole in all Siberia through which by a bare possibility a runaway exile may dream of smug-

## Prisoners of Russia

gling himself aboard a foreign ship, on which, if undetected, he may as a stowaway leave his beloved fatherland and perchance within one eventful hour become absolutely a free man. It is by this route that some of the best-known and most influential Russian refugees now in America and England have succeeded in making their escape.

It will be readily inferred, therefore, that at Vladivostok, both in the town and its approaches, and particularly in the harbour and on all outgoing ships, the vigilance and watchfulness of the police are greater than in any other part of Siberia.

On a little hill at the lower end of the town, whence the ships sail, there is a stockade. Inside this is the prison where unfortunates baffled at the supreme moment are promptly immured.

The next morning, punctually at nine o'clock, the Préfet called, and, our *droschkis* starting off at a bound at the word "Pashol," we were in three or four minutes sharply halted at the heavy unpainted gates of the huge stockade so common to Siberian prisons. On entering the large yard, I remarked to the Préfet that I did not wish my visit to be an inconvenience, and that he must tell me in advance what were the usual restrictions to which visitors are expected to conform.

## The Vladivostok Prison

"There are no restrictions," he replied; "go where you like, look at what you like, and ask the prisoners what questions you like. That you may hear as much as you can to put over against anything you may be told by officers like myself, it may be more convenient for you if I point out to you some prisoners who can talk German or French, and, as I can't talk either of these languages very well, you can have your conversations all to yourselves. It is only fair that I put you on your guard in one particular, however, and if you find that I am mistaken you may tell me afterward. You may go all through this prison, but you will probably be unable to discover a single exile convict or prisoner who will admit that he has done anything wrong, or that he knows what crime he has been accused of committing. You will probably find that every one of those you talk with has been sent here by mistake. The greatest difficulty a Russian magistrate has to deal with is this: the Russian prisoner is so certain to be a liar, that, I must admit, his own testimony is by itself never accepted. The verdict of the judge in every case has to be based entirely upon the testimony of others, upon circumstantial evidence, or upon both combined. The prisoner is always allowed to make his own statement, but the judge, if he has had any experience, believes no part

## Prisoners of Russia

of it except what is corroborated by other evidence."

Within this inclosure were several rough wooden sheds or houses of the unpainted Siberian type, and a large yard about which fifty or sixty prisoners were leisurely strolling, reminding one of the yard of an English workhouse, except that the inmates in this case were without uniforms or badges, each wearing his own clothes and enjoying his own personality. The appearance of a new face seemed to interest them, for instead of shunning us they manifested an inclination towards respectful neighbourliness, as they doffed their caps and looked expectant, as if hoping for a little conversation.

The front building and the largest, where we commenced our rounds, was used in almost its entire length as a general lounging place alternative to the yard. On three sides it had the usual raised and inclined wooden benches which are used universally in Russian barracks and prisons, and which at night serve as sleeping berths. At the time we entered this room there might have been about forty or fifty prisoners there, simply lounging on the benches, some gossiping, and some playing with dirty diminutive cards.

From this large room or hall we entered a large passage to the left, flanked on either side

## The Vladivostok Prison

by cells. The greater number of these were open and unoccupied, but some of those which were closed were unlocked at my request. Each cell was, I should say, about eight feet wide and fourteen feet long. Being entirely constructed of wood, and the dividing walls being partitions that reached only part of the way to the ceiling, they lacked the sensation of dampness which strikes a visitor in the driest of stone cells. With these partial divisions, the confinement could hardly be termed solitary.

The wooden bunk in the cell served both for sleeping and sitting, either of which prisoners seemed free to indulge in in their own way. We passed leisurely from building to building, each of which closely resembled the others in its simple, wooden, barrack-like bareness. Everywhere the furniture consisted of the same wooden bunk only, except in the general room or hall, where there was one table, but no seats other than the bunk.

Speaking generally, there was nothing in any part of the prison to impress a visitor with the idea of cleanliness, neatness, or method. Nor, on the other hand, was there apparent anything notably obnoxious. The latrines at the rear part of the yard, however, were evidently allowed to be as repulsive as the prisoners chose to make them. The predominant impression

## Prisoners of Russia

from the beginning to the end of the visit, here as in Siberian prisons generally, was one of utter shiftlessness in the management.

The prisoners themselves were certainly a motley crew. They were free to wash as much as they chose, and, indeed, had nothing to do but to wash; it appeared, however, to be generally regarded as a sacred right to remain dirty. To this there were, of course, all sorts of exceptions, and it was just this personal freedom, combined with the retention of their own clothing, which checkered this motley crowd with its variously interesting or repulsive personalities, and which to a shrewd character reader furnished a clew to their respective histories. The promiscuousness of this generally dishevelled group strongly reminded me of other groups which I had seen in days gone by, in some temporary Northern prisons, where Southern civilian rebels were confined during the American conflict for and against secession.

True to his own proposal, made to me on entering the prison, the Préfet now purposely turned away, conversing with one or two wardens, and left me entirely free to wander about in my own way, and to talk without restraint with several of the prisoners who had been pointed out to me as being able to converse in French or German.

## The Vladivostok Prison

There was no hindrance to this in the shape of shackles, for, much to my surprise, I had not yet detected a leg chain, or even a pair of handcuffs, either in use or out of use, in any part of the prison.

My principal difficulty now arose from the prisoners themselves, for at each attempt to take one of them aside for the strictly private conversation I desired, the eagerness of others to join in was so great, and the babel of complaints so voluminous, that, before any one of them could make himself intelligible, his voice was almost sure to be drowned in jargon and confusion. I seemed to be regarded by these unfortunates as a rare and heaven-sent medium, a few moments with whom might secure a publication of their wrongs, so all of them insisted on making the most of their opportunity at the same moment.

It must not be imagined that I was inclined to blame them for this, particularly in their condition, for anywhere, everywhere, and in whatever circumstances, Russians are apt to talk as canary-birds sing, which is not at all, or all together.

One of the prisoners particularly attracted my attention, for, though evidently his only comb and brush were his fingers, his shaggy condition was painfully incongruous with the refinement of his features and bearing.

## Prisoners of Russia

This prisoner spoke capital French and fairly good German, and, as most of the others did not understand either of these languages, he and I were able to have our talk to ourselves undisturbed. When we were out of hearing of the others this poor fellow informed me that within two hours of its sailing, and in the course of the final police search, he had been discovered in the hold of an American ship, where he had hidden until he was almost dead for want of food, having, however, in the semi-unconsciousness of exhaustion, neglected the slight precaution of concealing his feet, which, sticking out from some part of the cargo, had betrayed him.

In solemn confidence he then confessed to me that he was a political exile who had served his good-conduct term in Nertchinsk, and with a false passport, and under various disguises, had made his way across the remaining part of Siberia, managing finally, by adroitness and a little bribery, to go out to the ship on a lighter late at night as a pretended stevedore. He had destroyed his false passport, and any identification or proof against him prior to his discovery must depend upon the ingenuity of the authorities.

He said that he had reason to believe that a good many more of his fellow-prisoners were there under similar conditions, but that, as they

## The Vladivostok Prison

were all very suspicious of each other, he was not quite certain except in one instance.

I felt very much touched by the frankness of this charming fellow's confidence and the sigh of relief which followed his confession. Something furtively passed from my waistcoat pocket to his hand, and, assuming a brusque expression, which I saw he understood, I turned away with a sad heart. The sense of utter helplessness on such occasions is simply crushing.

The prediction of the Préfet was fully verified by the other prisoners I interviewed. "What brings you here?" "I don't know." "But what have you done?" "I don't know." "How long have you been here?" "Six weeks," "three months," "five months," would be the various answers. "But why have you not had a trial?" "I don't know. Won't you please ask the Préfet and tell me?"

This prolonged detention with only occasional and repeated remands, but without final trial, was on all hands the supreme complaint, and it seemed to me so entirely just and reasonable that I was determined to try to get some explanation of it at the earliest opportunity.

Taking my own route, I pried into every nook and cranny for chains, *plêts*, rods, and other instruments of torture, but, although some were

## Prisoners of Russia

doubtless available in case of need, none was visible.

The worst and most degrading factor among prisoners merely under detention is the enforced idleness, the herding together of so many without anything whatever to occupy them. The demoralization of the prisoners resulting from this is the prime source of insubordination and outbreak on the one hand, and, on the other, of the alleged acts of cruelty by the officers who are held responsible for order. I heard afterward that, incident to this lax condition of things, the prison wardens were very susceptible to bribery. I received no specific proofs on this point, but under the circumstances it was easily possible.

The Préfet, when told that I had seen all I desired to see, positively thanked me for the interest I had taken in his department. He went farther: he ordered the *droschki* to stop at a hotel nearer than my own, and insisted that I should do him the favour of joining him at a luncheon he had already ordered. He begged me to tell him without reserve the impressions made upon me by my visit to the prison, and also to ask any questions which might occur to me concerning the general penal administration at Vladivostok.

The questions I did ask may be inferred from

## The Vladivostok Prison

a brief report of the Préfet's more interesting answers.

"Your questions," he said, "about the prolonged detentions without a final trial, also about the institution of habeas corpus, are very large questions indeed, and very pertinent. In older and more completely organized countries habeas corpus is invaluable, though even in such countries, not only in the United States but in England also, there have been times when this process has had to be suspended. Between these countries and Russia the differences are so great that your reasonings from analogy may lead to very false and unjust conclusions."

"In Russia, under our present conditions, we think it less deplorable that a few innocent persons should suffer by mistake than that the whole body of citizens and the Government itself should be in perpetual peril as a result of undue leniency."

"Look at the facts as they exist to-day right here in Vladivostok. You think you have discovered that a large proportion of the prisoners you have seen and talked with this morning have already been there for an unreasonable period, and that a still larger number are there without knowing the crime that is alleged against them, and are therefore without means of meeting any charge when it may be made

## Prisoners of Russia

against them in open court. I will allow for the sake of the argument that this is true, and, as you say, as sad as it is true.

"Now let us look at the other side—my side, we will say. It is unnecessary to say to one who knows Siberia so well as you do that if Vladivostok is allowed to become a free port of exit for fugitives, then good-bye to the colonization of Siberia!"

"If a fugitive succeeds in escaping, who is it that gets reprimanded? Myself. If at different times several escape, who is it that is permanently disgraced—perhaps cashiered? Myself. Now then, how am I to prevent such escapes?"

"Every Russian absent from home knows full well that he must always be ready to produce his true passport. Whenever we find such a person, whose passport appears suspicious, or who is without one, whether we have been put on his track or not, we take that fact as a crime, a negative one if you will, but in the eye of the law a crime for all that."

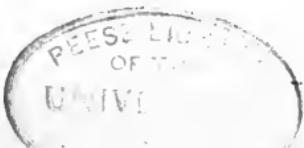
"On finding such a person, therefore, we put him for safe-keeping into the prison you have just visited until either he or we can satisfy the court as to his identity and history. This prison, then, is perhaps chiefly a House of Detention."

## The Vladivostok Prison

" If such a person is innocent, it is generally a very easy matter for him to furnish proof of his innocence within a comparatively short time. If, on the other hand, his forged, exchanged, or lost passport is a mere cover and part of a fraudulent disguise, the procuring of an authentic identification and history of him by ourselves is, as he knows and as he intends it to be, a tedious, difficult, and sometimes an impossible task. He may have zigzagged his way with different passports and under different names for thousands of miles through the wildest parts of Siberia. Imagine, if you can, the amount of correspondence and time required before an authenticated history of such a man can be presented in court against him."

" Now, Monsieur le Préfet, suppose the prisoner confesses nothing and the court discovers nothing, say for many months, what is the upshot of it all? "

" Ah! " said the Préfet, " now you have struck the one object of the trick. The prisoners all know that in such an event they can only be convicted as ' vagabonds.' For this the severest sentence the law allows is a comparatively light one. It is thus that some of the cleverest and most dangerous murderers and other exiles have managed to elude a life sentence, and to get off with the milder and shorter one which,



## Prisoners of Russia

in spite of our better judgment, the law compels us in such case to substitute for it.

"Why," continued my host, "you know as well as I do that all through Siberia there are convicts who are just as much 'professionals' in this 'Brodyas' or runaway business as were some of the soldiers in the American army, or in the bounty-jumping business; and it is exactly the most dangerous who are the most clever at it. Some of these fellows who have managed to exchange a life passport for a 'vagabond's passport' will sell it for a good sum in exchange for another life-sentence passport, and, trusting to their clever devices, will go on repeating their trick again and again in far-distant localities, thus making considerable sums of money. These are the rascals who, according to circumstances, can be the most craven of beggars and the most cruel of murderers. When hard pressed they stop at nothing. They are the brigands of Siberia."

"And may I ask, Monsieur le Préfet, what you do with one of this class when you at last succeed in convicting him?"

"Do with him? We send him out of the world."

"But I was not aware that Russian criminal law authorized either hanging or shooting, or any form of punishment certain to prove fatal."

## The Vladivostok Prison

"Just so—you are quite right. But as you seem anxious to go to the bottom of the question, I may tell you that we have a place which is a sort of purgatory for these fellows. There the career of a 'Brodyas' is hopelessly extinguished.

"Many hundred miles from here, out in the Okhotsk Sea, there is an island which on the maps is named Saghalien, or Sakhalin. Among the people it is called Ostrov Proklyatuick, or 'Isle of the Lost.' There a false passport is not worth the trouble of writing it. Passport or no passport, it's all the same there."

The Préfet had kindly offered to supply me with a guide at any time I might wish to visit First River Village, an exile settlement founded by a former philanthropic Governor in a pretty little valley only about three or four miles from Vladivostok, where he placed certain people whom he selected from the gangs which were passing through his hands *en route* to Sakhalin.

I declined the offer, because I have found that no traveller can learn what is most worth knowing in foreign countries if he goes as one of a party, but went with my interpreter instead.

As we entered the village, I noticed at the end of a cottage garden a woman milking her cow. So, taking a seat on a very dirty old wheel-barrow, I said to her, "If you saw a poor

## Prisoners of Russia

man who had not had his breakfast, would you be willing to sell him a glass of your new milk?"

With a humorous smile she replied, "If he were poor I would sell it to him at five kopecks a glass; if he were rich I would give it to him for nothing, because then his Honour would give me at least ten kopecks for it."

I helped her to carry her bucket to her kitchen, and she immediately strained some milk for me, placed a pitcher of it, with a couple of glasses, on a little rustic table under a trellised vine which shaded her doorway, and became as sociable as I could wish.

The story of her exile, as nearly as I could get it, was this: Her husband had been a soldier in the Imperial Guards, in the main an excellent man, if convivial in his tastes. But during a bout with some of his companions a drunken quarrel occurred, and blows were exchanged, from one of which his opponent afterward died. For this he was sentenced to Siberia, where, like thousands of other wives, she chose to accompany him at Government expense.

They had been allowed to build their own house in their own way, with the help of their neighbours and with the tools which the Government lent them for the purpose. Their clothing and food rations had been supplied to them the same as if they were in prison, and later

## The Vladivostok Prison

on, when they preferred it, they had been allowed to receive a money commutation instead. The clothing provided for all once a year consisted of a sheepskin coat, under-linen, three pairs of summer shoes, two pairs of winter boots, and occasionally a long winter overcoat.

With the pride of a good housekeeper she showed me through every part of her house, the condition of which was certainly greatly to her credit.

As her children were about eight and ten years of age, I smiled as I called her attention to a very clumsy wooden cradle swinging from the end of a pliable pole in the front room. Poor woman! On looking over my shoulder when I left the room, I caught her wiping her eyes with a corner of her coarse apron; I could see that I had cruelly awakened a sleeping sorrow which time had not effaced.

Turning again into the overstocked but slovenly kept flower garden, she informed me that her husband had a good situation in one of the principal stores in Vladivostok, and that the bulk of the farm work was therefore done by herself, the produce being readily sold at good prices in the town.

The neatness, brightness, and cheerful content in this little convict homestead were certainly equal to anything I had found in the home

## Prisoners of Russia

of any free colonist of a corresponding station in life in any part of Russia, and were such as might provoke the envy of many a Western settler in America.

I next visited a long wooden building four or five times larger than most of the village cottages. It occupied the centre of a large clearing, had no garden, no allotment, not even a fence around it, and looked rather like a general store-house. I found that it was simply a one-storied tenement, divided up into four or five separate residences, which had evidently been put up to meet some later requirement.

The door of the end residence being wide open, I mounted the rather high steps leading to it, and was cordially greeted by a superior-looking man who courteously invited me inside, promptly lighted up the *samovar*, set out glasses and sliced a lemon, drew up a couple of chairs, and, without question or apology, proceeded to prepare the never-failing *tchai* or tea which every Russian, however poor, is always ready to offer to his guest.

Though the interior was entirely of roughly hewn timbers and planks, there was on every hand some simple little thing or other which either by its style or arrangement inspired me with unavoidable respect for the personality of its occupant. In every part of his rough apart-

## The Vladivostok Prison

ment were little revelations of good-breeding. His muddy boots at the door were placed as they would be by a gentleman; his hat and coat were hung on wooden pegs; his simple writing materials were placed neatly and ready for instant use; and even the cuspidor had a carved wooden cover which concealed its use and converted it into an ornament. His person bore the signs of which these things were the counterpart. His blouse, though coarse, was clean, and the rough leather waist-belt compressed its shapelessness into neatly plaited folds. His manner, though shy and diffident, as that of exiles generally, was quiet, easy, respectful, and dignified.

He seemed very much pleased at the interest I took in the numerous photographs and prints which relieved the roughness of the walls. If I could judge from his changing expression as he pointed some of them out to me, they were precious mementos linking the sad present to a once hopeful past.

The sum of what I gathered from him during our long chat was of quite a different nature from the story I have just recounted. He was one of the several unmarried political exiles for whose accommodation this long tenement building had been specially erected. After graduating at a technological school in St. Peters-

## Prisoners of Russia

burg, he had secured an appointment as an engineer. A friend of his, who had never divulged to him the fact that he was a nihilist, had secured his help in the construction of certain electrical apparatus, which might have been intended for a dozen different purposes. He confined his attention simply to the details of its mechanism, remaining entirely ignorant of the specific use for which his friend intended it. Thus was he dragged into the network of a political plot.

To the detectives who had discovered both plot and conspirators and traced the apparatus in question, his protestations of ignorance seemed absurd; to the court which tried him his allegations of innocence were incredible.

Condemned to penal servitude for life, he at last reached Nickolaivsk *en route* to Sakhalin. It happened just then that an engineer was wanted very much in Vladivostok, where all kinds of Government works were then being rapidly pushed forward. He had continued to work there ever since. He told me that he lived rent free, and at the present time was receiving from the Government ten roubles a week besides the money commutation for his rations and Government clothing, and that, if he could only become oblivious of the police espionage and the restrictions common to all persons in his position, his

## The Vladivostok Prison

life might be regarded not only as tolerable, but as exceptionally comfortable.

Though he did not hesitate to express his chagrin at the complete injustice of his situation, his indignation seemed to be directed against his false friends rather than against the Government. The attitude of the citizens of Vladivostok towards him, he said, was one of sympathy and respect, but, as he was obliged to be at home at the prescribed hours, he rarely had an opportunity of mingling with them in their frequent entertainments.

In Monsieur T—— I found an entire freedom from the sullen and suspecting mood exiles so commonly exhibit, and this I attributed in part to his comparative freedom and in part to his consciousness of what I believed to be his entire innocence.

The special fascination which grew more and more the longer I stayed with him arose largely, perhaps, from a delicate and refined self-suppression not uncommonly found in cultured members of the Roman Catholic priesthood, and which unconsciously grows upon those who for a long period lead lives of forced or voluntary self-abnegation. It is a curious phenomenon, but in him, as in many others, this manner was unavoidably suggestive of inherent superiority.

It became known among my Russian friends

## Prisoners of Russia

in Vladivostok that, on leaving there, I purposed to explore the volcanic island of Yezo, beginning if possible at Cape Soya at the north and finishing at Hakodate in the south. Judging from the charts in my possession, I thought that my better course would be to manage, if possible, to reach Sakhalin, and thence to strike Soya by crossing in some way the Straits of La Pérouse.

Some of my naval friends thought this project practicable, others not. I soon learned the many reasons why all previous Siberian travellers had quite failed to get as far as Sakhalin, and that since the publication of some of the articles by Mr. Kennan, the official prohibitions were even more strict than before.

With great regret I was preparing to abandon the project when a part of the problem received a most easy solution.

As I have fully given the details in my *Life with Trans-Siberian Savages*,\* I will simply remark here that this solution came to me at a dinner party to which just then I was luckily invited.

At the dinner I happened to be seated next to a remarkably genial Russian prince, to whom I mentioned my wish towards the end of the

---

\* Longmans, Green & Co. 1893.

## The Vladivostok Prison

dinner. This led to his introducing me to a military officer who sat directly opposite us. To my astonishment and delight I found that this officer was none other than the Governor of the southern part of Sakhalin, who resided at Korsakoffsk, the very place to which I wished to go. Before the evening was over, this same Governor and myself were warm friends. He told me that he had been taking his annual holiday in Vladivostok, and that, his time being up, he was about to return to his post as soon as the steamer was ready to take him back to his solitude. He no sooner discovered that I would like to extend my hands in that direction than he took me bodily in his arms and overwhelmed me with the most effusive invitations to go right along with him and be his guest as long as ever I would stay. This circumstance was so fortuitous that I almost felt mistrustful of it, thinking it might be simply an outburst of after-dinner exuberance which would be entirely forgotten the next morning. Early on the following day I was consulting Kunst & Albers, my banking agents, about the possible reliability of this surprising postprandial invitation, when who should enter the office but this very officer, who also was one of their customers. He quickly showed that he had not forgotten me, and in a few minutes the project was arranged on a basis which made

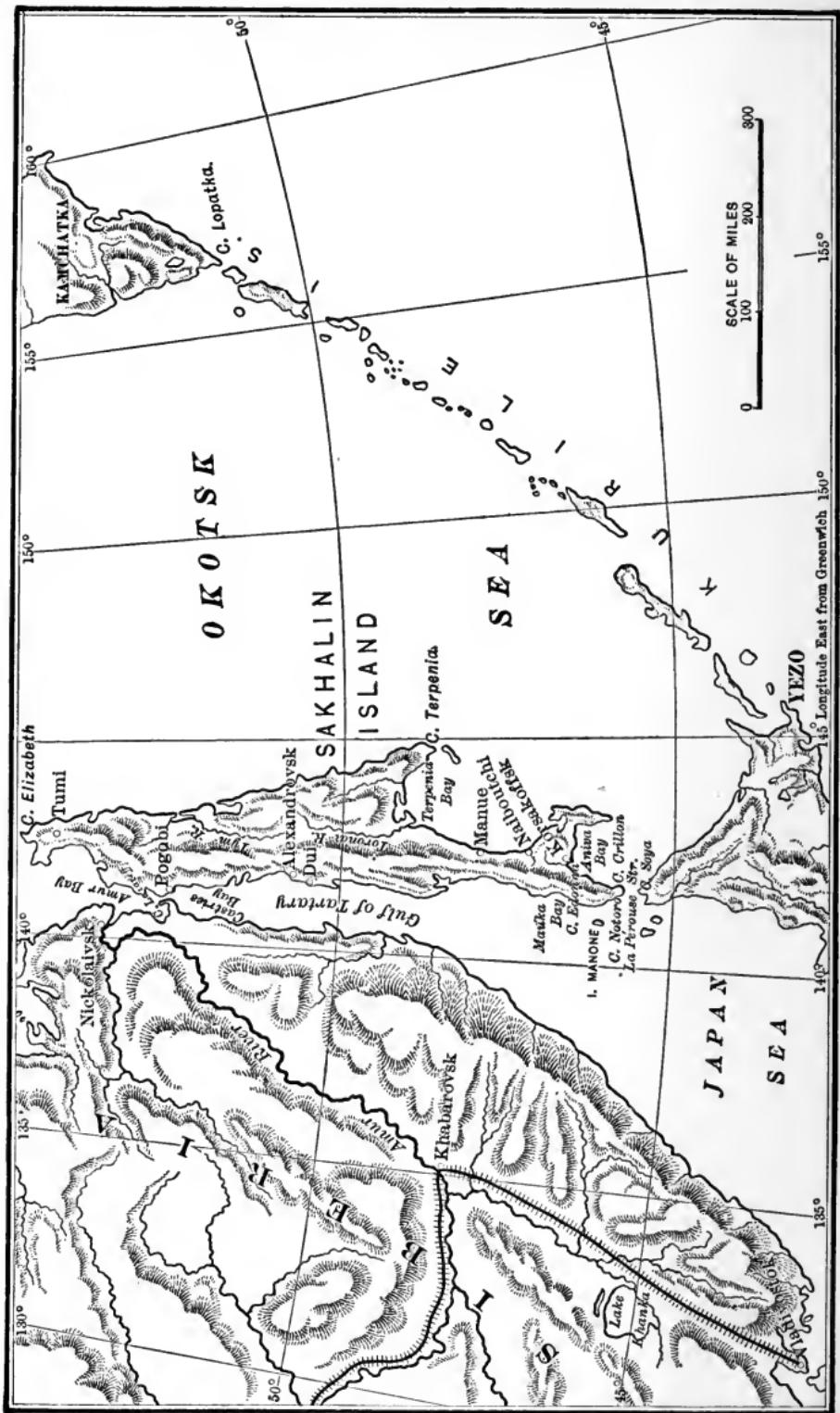
## Prisoners of Russia

it possible for me to accept the invitation heartily and without any misgiving.

My banker happened to have previously looked over my letter of credit, and, apparently impressed by the amount of it, seemed only too pleased to act as our intermediary.

I informed my astonished landlord, Tissier, of the invitation, and of my arrangements for an unlimited period in Sakhalin *en route* to Yezo. He undertook with great enthusiasm the details for the embarkation, and seemed to regard my situation as highly dramatic.





Sakhalin Island and vicinity.

## CHAPTER III

### TO SAKHALIN

EARLY the next morning a boy came to my room in great haste with a little bit of light-brown paper on which was scrawled, "Baikall in. Starts in two or three hours or as soon as ready. Am sending the colonel's baggage aboard. Tissier."

Within ten minutes my baggage was in the hands of the porter, and I on the way to Kunst & Albers with a strong little valise to be loaded with silver roubles.

Directly after my noon *déjeuner* I took a boat which was waiting for me at a little landing nearly opposite the hotel and rowed out to the steamship Baikall, where I found that one of the best and largest cabins had already been assigned to me. As is my custom on going aboard a ship, I immediately arranged myself and my belongings so as to have nothing to do after starting. I then awaited the arrival of my friend the Governor and the captain of the vessel.

Two o'clock, four o'clock, and then six

## Prisoners of Russia

o'clock came, but with Siberian punctuality neither colonel nor captain had arrived, causing me to fear that perhaps at last there had been a change of orders both for sailing and destination.

About half-past six, however, my fears were put at rest by the arrival alongside of several boats in which were Colonel S—, Captain Limaschersky, several military officers, and Mr. Schouvaloff, who, with an old friend of mine, a Mr. Tartsoff of Tientsin, was going to have an interview with General Kononovitch, the Governor-General of Alexandrovsk, on some matters which Mr. Tartsoff told me were of very great importance.

By seven we got under way and at once dinner was announced. As usual everywhere under these circumstances, everybody who was a bad sailor was anxious to "make sure" of laying in a good stock of food while capable of it. Being myself a good sailor, and having been told of the currents we should soon encounter, I was modestly careful to do exactly the contrary.

On the second day the weather continued fine, but as we got clear from the shelter of the mainland and well out into the Sea of Japan, we began to encounter the northeastern current, which with steadily increasing force was bound to be exactly dead ahead of us all the way to the

## To Sakhalin

bay of Aniva. During the latter part of the day squally weather set in, accompanied by the kind of cross seas frequently met with between Hull and Stockholm.

At the appointed time the humorous steward ironically rang a brass bell to call yesterday's convivial guests to dinner, but not a cabin door opened. The captain and myself alone responded to the call. The third day brought into view the unfamed but wonderful Island Rishiri-shima.

This island is about ten miles in length and consists of a single conical mountain, its uniform sides sweeping in beautiful curve to its apex, a height of about six thousand feet, giving it a monumental appearance almost unique among the islands of the world. Though it is a good way out at sea from the principal island of Japan, and is the first part of the Empire which comes into view from the Siberian direction, had I seen it in any other part of the world it would instantly have suggested Japan to my mind. In Vesuvius, Teneriffe, the Lebanon, and at St. Lucia we have various approximations, but the divine Fuji-Yama is Queen.

Throughout this sunny day the view of Rishiri-shima was a heavenly enchantment, and I wondered I had not heard of its existence.

At first, above a map of clouds, appeared an

## Prisoners of Russia

iridescent white cone clear-cut against a deep blue, with a fleecy white pennon floating at its apex. Later the bank of cloud was riven, and as the sun gained power the entire outline of the mountain was completely revealed, the general effect recalling the enchanting phenomenon in chiaroscuro to be seen sometimes at the Taj-Mahal, when the gorgeous reflection from the setting sun yields to the rival light of a rising moon, till this incomparable mausoleum becomes a silent ghostly presence palpitating with life. In my intense and loving admiration of Fuji, I have lived where, from my balcony, I could follow her changeful aspects from hour to hour, by day or by night, through all the varying seasons of the year; yet, even to my Japanese friends, I venture to commend an acquaintance with the still more delicate spirituality of her almost unknown sister at the blending of the waters of the Gulf of Tartary and of the Japanese Sea. Compared with many other mountain shrines, Rishiri-shima, with her brighter inspiration, will some day come to be regarded, I think, as the most beautiful in the Empire.

We afterward passed another Japanese island, Rebunshiri-shima, and on Saturday morning were off the Straits of La Pérouse. On the fourth morning we sighted Cape Nossyass, the most northerly point of the island of Yezo, and

## To Sakhalin

later on Cape Crillon, the first point of the land for which we were bound.

An impressive feature of this voyage, and one which indeed continued to the very end, was its solitude. From the deck of our ship not once did we catch sight or sign of a single living thing.

Everybody being now on deck and employed in becoming acquainted with everybody else, I became conscious that I was being regarded as a very rare bird in those regions. My friend, Governor S——, who seemed to know nearly every one on board, introduced me all around, always explaining that I was travelling with him to Korsakoffsk, where I was to be his guest through the summer.

He was a most soldierly looking man, standing full six feet two, and straight as an arrow, with a handsome face, clean shaven, glowing with robust health. As impulsive as a child, he could be by turns just as affectionate and just as tyrannical. He greatly resembled the German premier Caprivi, and never failed to give an extra twirl to his mustache when reminded of it.

Captain T——, the commander of the Baikall, was a dark little man, with a simply uncontrollable vivacity. He had no time for a single thought about himself, so constantly was he

## Prisoners of Russia

thinking of the comfort and happiness of others. In his versatility he was almost a match for my friend Tissier of Vladivostok, both being of a type only to be found in the more remote corners of creation, where one would be least likely to look for them.

Born in one of the more northern ports of Norway, trained as an engineer and as a sailor, he had visited most of the ports of the world. Arriving one day at Nickolaivsk, he became a Russian subject, and from first to last had been the only commander of the Baikall. He was equally fluent in French, German, and Russian, and spoke English with remarkable accuracy. What he did not know about this region nobody knew, and anybody he did not know was nobody. We talked together on nearly every question, both general and those which a Russian would usually evade, yet he always expressed himself with a freedom more characteristic of an American. His fund of personal knowledge of the early settlement of Sakhalin I have not found equalled by any other person. Though a martinet as a commander, in the smallest as well as in the largest sense, Captain T—— was everybody's friend.

My old friend Mr. Tartsoff, of Tientsin, was one of the most important passengers aboard. A Russian merchant prince, he had the principal

## To Sakhalin

monopoly of the tea caravan trade between the Chinese city and Russia. Whether on commerce or politics, his views appeared to be as large and as sound as his experience. For his service to Russian commerce on a certain occasion he had been decorated by the Emperor in person at St. Petersburg. It was in connection with an important question touching a possible Russian extension in the direction of Korea, of which he gave me many details, that he and Mr. Schouvaloff, the official administrator of the Baikall, were going to Alexandrovsk. Mr. Schouvaloff was both gracious and generous. He begged me to continue my trip with himself and Mr. Tartsoff as his guest as far as Dui, where he said that he could insure me every hospitality. In view of my being an ex-military officer in a foreign regular service, he kindly authorized the captain to charge me only officer's rates, *et cetera*, then and at any future time I should be travelling on the Baikall, and all this after only the short acquaintance which had commenced since our departure from Vladivostok.

The few other passengers on board were officers going to their military posts, and one Russian, who was not an official, but a wealthy merchant, of whom I may mention something of interest later on. He was quite free, but only within a certain area.

## Prisoners of Russia

In what other country in the world would an unknown stranger have been treated with such unaffected cordiality and generosity on such short acquaintance?

Looking carefully through the saloon as well as on deck and in the forecastle, I did not find a single Russian on board who had either dark eyes or a Roman nose. These features I have found extremely rare in all companies of Russians from any part of the Empire north of the Caucasus. The thick, foreshortened, *retroussé* nose, and the gray colour of the eye, so prevalent among the northern Russians, I judge to be referable to their Gothic origin. I think that I have not seen these features in a single instance among the full-blooded Tartars.

From what I have said of my fellow-travellers it may easily be imagined that, with finer weather, smoother water, and Korsakoffsk near at hand, we became quite a genial party.

At luncheon on that third day, for the first time since the superfluous dinner at starting, every person took his place, and all seemed inclined to make amends for past delinquencies. Nearly everybody's health was drunk, including that of the Emperor, of the Queen of England, and of the President of the United States; and as for the rough voyage, nobody "had minded

## To Sakhalin

it a bit"; indeed, they had "quite enjoyed it!" I was glad of this information.

Promenading the deck after luncheon with one of the officers of the ship, I remarked on the exceptional efficiency of the boatswain, and expressed my surprise at the excellence of the rest of his crew in this distant region, where skilled labour must be so hard to obtain.

He gave me a smile and a nudge which was plainly an invitation to the other end of the deck. When out of hearing, he said:

"You admired that boatswain of ours? Well, you are quite right, he is the best man on the ship—worth at least three of any ordinary seamen you might come across anywhere; that is, if you know how to manage him. Like nearly all the rest of the crew, that man is a life convict. Of course we don't speak about it, but at different times that peaceful-looking chap has murdered no less than three men; yet I never have any trouble with him, and a better man for getting work out of the others under him I don't want.

"You ask me why doesn't he run away? And if he is a reliable and a safe man to have about? Why not? The military guards always on duty on the boat understand their duty; none of these fellows can pass them. Besides, the convicts know when they are well off. They

## Prisoners of Russia

would a thousand times rather be here than be wearing leg chains in one of the island prisons.

"To be sure, the officials are very careful in selecting men for this job. These hands have all completed their good-conduct service, were all seamen before, and this boatswain, indeed, was actually an officer in the Russian Royal Navy, so no wonder he knows his work, and knows how to make the men under him do theirs.

"You see, on board here they get first-rate grub, they dress the same as free sailors do, they get extra allowances besides, and if they only don't think about it, they are just as well off as they would be in freedom. I suppose some of them, such chaps as the boatswain for instance, must think about their condition sometimes—it isn't in human nature not to—but they know that if they should try to do more than think, the guard would shoot them down as quick as a flash."

He started off to give some necessary directions to some of these men, but, having had a capital luncheon and being in the most friendly state possible, he suddenly turned on his heel and added as a final remark:

"But then, don't you see, if these chaps had been in your free and glorious country—well, then they wouldn't 'a' been here at all, would

## To Sakhalin

they? Ha, ha, ha! Don't you see-e-e—understand, eh?" This last remark was accompanied by a gesture with his forefinger, which pointed upward from under his ear.

All the afternoon the Sakhalin coast was clearly in view, and its dreariness fully equalled my expectation. Except for the lighthouse at Cape Crillon, nothing came into view between there and Korsakoffsk to suggest that any human being had been there before us. Wooded hills extended all along the coast, and were very monotonous. As in the Siberian ranges, the conical peaks, so common in Japan, here nowhere diversified the sky-line.

It was announced that, as we should arrive at Korsakoffsk before dark, dinner would be ready at six, instead of at seven, for the convenience of such as were going ashore.

As we were entering the beautiful bay of Aniva, the Governor appeared on deck in full uniform—a governor every inch. Preparatory to landing, nearly all the passengers came out, wonderfully changed in appearance, for the warm-hearted Governor had generously invited them to go ashore as his guests during the two or three hours the boat remained at Korsakoffsk.

With the impatience which is always shown by passengers on a steamer when approaching

## Prisoners of Russia

their port of destination, we made short work of a really capital dinner. I suppose that nobody felt more impatiently curious than myself.

Standing in a group of several persons, who, with outstretched forefingers, were uttering questions and exclamations—of which the chief were, “Where is Korsakoffsk?” “There!” “I don’t see it!” “Why, right there!” “Oh, yes, I think I see it.” “Oh, yes, as plainly as possible! Thank you.” “Oh, but you are looking in the wrong direction! it’s over yonder,” and so forth—I descried more and more plainly every minute what I must confess was rather disappointing.

On the face of a pretty hill, flanked and backed by other hills and mountains, appeared a very broken line of unpainted wooden houses running from near the beach straight up the hill, at the top of which arose a large straggling building with tower and flagstaff, from which floated a flag that, reflecting the warm light of the setting sun, stood out in very pretty relief against the dark and thickly wooded mountain behind it. This large building, I was informed, was the prison.

Near the water’s edge, farther to the right, was a small group of shabby-looking buildings, and in front of them a little rough-looking pier

## To Sakhalin

or landing made of piles, of the kind so familiar to the traveller on American rivers and lakes.

The bay of Aniva afforded the only really pleasing view we had seen that day. Korsakoffsk itself, however, appeared so forbidding and dreary that, had I been travelling merely for pleasure, I should have changed my mind about landing at all. Outside of the little settlement itself, look which way you would, there was not the least sign of human habitation. On the bay itself there was not a single sail or sign of human interest.

When at last we came to the only safe anchorage, at least a mile from the pier, we could see a number of military guards and considerable movement at the landing.

The military guards of our steamer took up their positions at both sides of the ship's gangways. Ladders were lowered, and two boats containing officers arrived alongside. They had come to greet the returning Governor and to get the only glimpse of the outside world which is offered them by the occasional visits of the Baikall.

The greetings, which commenced with a dignified military salute, promptly lapsed into affectionate huggings and kissings and the inevitable drinking of healths. The officers perform this ceremony so often that one wonders they have

## Prisoners of Russia

any health left. Presently there approached what looked like a man-of-war's barge with a flag flying at the stern, all in the smartest, trimmest, most gallant style imaginable.

The moment the Governor-Colonel appeared at the gangway the oarsmen, with caps off and oars erect, came to attention and, led by their coxswain, gave a prolonged and thundering cheer, the words of it being "Tdraviya Zhalaihem vasha vesoko Blagorodiye!" or "Health and service to your High Honour."

The Governor returned the salute with "Tdorova," or "How does *it* do?"

Then all fell to business. The colonel's luggage and my own were quickly transferred to a boat alongside for the purpose. Captain L—— marshalled the persons invited by the Governor to go ashore, all of whom were shown to the crimson cushions of his boat, the bottom of which was also carpeted in the same colour.

As the Governor descended the ladder, the oarsmen repeated their previous salute, which was joined in by the sailors on the ship.

The instant the Governor and myself were seated, the coxswain gave the word and every oar was in motion. Captain L—— was the life of the party, and the trip, though short, was exhilarating, the effect being greatly enhanced by the excellent form of our crew. The naval uni-

## To Sakhalin

form of the men was faultlessly smart in white and blue, their stroke perfect; while in physique it would be hard to find a man-of-war's crew which could surpass them. Yet, as I afterward discovered, every man of this magnificent crew was a murderer.

At the shabby, rickety little landing stage the Governor was received by the guard there with a salute which was much less demonstrative than that of the sailors, and was strictly military, as became soldiers of the Imperial Army.

The party was quickly transferred to the *droschkis* which were awaiting our arrival, the Governor, the captain, and myself getting into the front one, which was the private *droschki* of the Governor and was a close imitation of an Irish jaunting car.

At the word "Pashol!" from the Governor, his stalwart coachman, with a whip-crack like a pistol shot, started his team at a gallop along the short coast road, doubled the sharp corner without slowing up in the least, and took us whirling up the steep road which is the main street of the settlement, in a style that nearly landed me at the wrong place. As the hill rose more and more steeply before us, the faster and faster we went, until in the midst of a break-neck gallop the foaming horses were halted as suddenly as they had started. As we alighted

## Prisoners of Russia

at the door I noticed that we had got so far ahead of the other *droschkis* that not one of them was in sight.

Without now suggesting that there are any precautionary reasons for travelling at such speed, I afterward found that this was the Governor's habitual pace, and that his driver was possessed with the idea that any speed short of the fastest possible would be inconsistent with the superior importance and dignity of his High Honour, his master and Governor.

Every household on this street knows the jingle of the Governor's *droschki* bells, and this whirlwind-like entrance was a public announcement to all and sundry within the homes that his annual holiday in distant Siberia was over, and that he had safely returned to them in Korsakoffsk.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE REPUTATION OF SAKHALIN

THE exiles and convicts who are in the mines and prisons towards the far-distant end of Siberia, and therefore nearest to Sakhalin, generally come to be more and more aware of its proximity. At Irkutsk, Kara, Nertchinsk, Vladivostok, or Nickolaivsk, if Prisoner 41, we will say, would have No. 43 know that their missing comrade (42) had for some additional crime been at last condemned to this much-dreaded country, he might whisper that No. 42 had been sent to "Ostrov Proklyatuick," the "Isle of the Lost."

On my return to Europe I could not discover that any book in any language had been written containing general information respecting the ordinary life of officials, exiles, or convicts on this island, based upon its author's actual experience.

The Rev. Mr. Lansdell showed his usual love for details by combining a number of facts about the island with interesting statements which he

## Prisoners of Russia

had obtained from persons who might be supposed to know. In his book on Siberia, Mr. George Kennan also introduced statements about Sakhalin; but he says that he turned back at Nertchinsk, which is over two thousand miles from southern Sakhalin. One book on the Siberian question awakened pleasant anticipations in my breast, its author stating that he had made an exhaustive investigation respecting Sakhalin. My hopes fell like the stick of a rocket, however, when he added that this "exhaustive investigation" was made at Irkutsk, and consisted of a single interview with a Russian soldier he met there *en route* from Sakhalin to Moscow, on the completion of his term of military service on the island. Once upon a time two merchants, a Mr. Denbigh and a Mr. Emery, obtained certain mining and trading concessions, but I am not aware that they have contributed anything to the literature on Siberia.

As the result of my inquiries, not only in Sakhalin itself, but in various parts of Russia as well, I came to think that it is rather the policy of the Russian Government to discourage any definite information about Sakhalin from reaching the Russian people; that it prefers to maintain the dreadful mysteriousness with which it is enshrouded, in order that the fear and horror of the place may have a deterrent and salutary

## The Reputation of Sakhalin

effect upon the criminally inclined throughout the Empire.

In other countries, however, Sakhalin and its convicts have been written about by several authors without information at first hand.

In his book on Siberia and the Nihilists, Mr. W. I. Armstrong remarks: "There is little doubt that the punishment of convicts on Sakhalin is greater than that inflicted at any formal establishment in Siberia proper."

Respecting one of the forms of punishment which he says is habitually practised there, he remarks: "Those tied to rings receive from one to two hundred strokes of the knout," while he has this to impart regarding the treatment of would-be runaways: "The system of man-hunting is carried on so near the convicts' quarters that many unfortunate exiles with no thought of escaping fall victims within a stone's throw of their barracks. . . . There is a reward of three hundred roubles for every escaped convict, dead or alive," and "the proof required is the severed head of the convict, and, as they are all branded, it is easy to decide against any mistake. . . . At Nickolaivsk," which is the last overland station *en route* to this place, "those who use a wheel-barrow are chained to it, those who wield a pick are chained to a rock beside their work," and "nearly half the prisoners are insane."

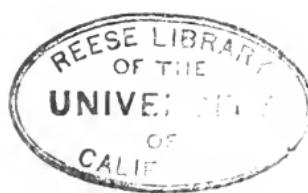
## Prisoners of Russia

Speaking of the treatment *en route* of such prisoners as are sent direct to Sakhalin from western Russia by the sea, Mr. Armstrong says: "It was at this remote and awful Sakhalin (at the atrocities of whose administration even the Nihilists would appear to have fallen short in their descriptions) that the arrival of a convict vessel filled with political and other prisoners in 1876 caused the press of the whole East to cry out in horror of Russian barbarity. Aboard this were several hundreds of prisoners confined in iron cages to whose floors they were heavily chained. These prisoners, such as had not died and left their cages empty, had made in the fiercest heats of summer the whole journey of ten or twelve thousand miles from Cronstadt through the burning Mediterranean and Indian Seas to their destination."

Prince Kropotkin, who appears to have been in Siberia first as an official and afterward as an exile, remarks respecting Sakhalin, on page 22 of his book *In Russian and French Prisons*: "Few places in the Russian Empire are worse than this island, therefore it is to Sakhalin that the Russian Government sends now its hard-labour exiles. . . . In the meantime a new hell worse than Atakni has been devised. Hard-labour convicts are sent now to die on the Sakhalin islands."



A mid-winter mail-train in Sakhalin.



## The Reputation of Sakhalin

On page 202 he says: "There is in the northern Pacific, close by the coasts of Russian Manchuria, a wide island, one of the largest in the world, but so out of the way of seafarers, so wild and barren and so difficult of access, that, until the last century, it was quite ignored and considered as a mere appendix to the continent. Few places in the Russian Empire are worse than this island."

Other statements about Sakhalin in the same book are: "Sakhalin ranks among the last in the world for human habitation. . . . Little is known about the condition of convicts on Sakhalin itself. . . . In 1879 a report appeared in the Russian press, signed by a Russian merchant, stating that the arbitrary conduct of the chief commander at Sakhalin knew no limits. The prison administration was accused of stealing the last coppers of the convicts. . . ."

On page 220 we read that "a doctor, Mr. A.—, wrote in October, 1880, from Alexandrovsk, 'I am ordered to the Korsakoffsk hospital on the south coast, but I cannot reach it before next June. My colleague abandons his post; he can no longer hear all that is going on there'—significant words which permit a Russian reader to guess the truth, especially when they are followed by these: 'The chief of the settlement seldom visits the barracks; he does

## Prisoners of Russia

not appear otherwise than surrounded by armed wardens. The Governor of the prison dare not appear among the convicts.' . . . One of the greatest inducements of Sakhalin in the eyes of the administration was that escapes would be exceedingly difficult; this inducement surely exists. . . . Each prisoner captured in Siberia by indigenes is valued at ten roubles when brought back alive and five roubles when killed; three roubles in the latter case, and six roubles in the former, serve on Sakhalin to induce the shilyaks to hunt the runaways. . . ." Page 223: "These shilyaks came across twelve nonconformists with infants in arms; they were all killed by the shilyaks."

So much for statements by popular authors. An official report may, however, be deemed of more value. In such a report made in 1882, General Anuchin, Governor-General of eastern Siberia, speaks of the gold mines of Kara, which he says is altogether the most hated and dreaded spot in Siberia. He compares Sakhalin with it in these terms:

"Penal servitude on the island of Sakhalin is organized in the same way as at Kara; but the work at the former place is much harder, and the place itself is wilder and more solitary. This, with the prospect of remaining on a distant island as a settler after the completion of a term

## The Reputation of Sakhalin

of hard labour, makes the lot of a Sakhalin convict a very hard one, and one that corresponds much more nearly with the punishment which the law has in view."

Under this report the Emperor of Russia is said to have written, "A Melancholy Picture."

It is one thing to put exiles into Siberia, it is another thing to hold them there. It is a very common impression that all, or nearly all, the exiles in Siberia are confined in prisons there. This is a great mistake. By far the larger proportion of the whole number of exiles and convicts in Siberia are on "ticket of leave" or conditional release.

Of the vagrant class the larger number sent to Siberia are released on this system almost as soon as they reach the place to which they are consigned.

Criminal and political convicts, on the contrary, are not released until after at least two years or more of probation, during which time they must pass their nights in prison. If sufficiently politic, almost any criminal whatever can obtain release sooner or later. From these "Free Convicts," as they are called, come the "Brodyags" or "Runaways" who infest and sometimes terrorize the country. Of these it is the political exiles, and the more clever and dangerous of the criminals—those, indeed, against

## Prisoners of Russia

whom the Government is most anxious to protect society—who are most successful in managing to return to it.

It was to correct this condition of things that Sakhalin was selected as an island prison which should be absolutely secure.

Political exiles, who for a long time were exempt from deportation to Sakhalin, and who by many are still supposed to enjoy that immunity, came at last to be sent there with other incorrigibles of the “Brodyag” class. For proof on this point the following official communication may suffice:

“MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR,  
“CHIEF PRISON ADMINISTRATION No. 2926,  
“ST. PETERSBURG, March 1, 1888.

“*To the Governor of the Island of Sakhalin.*

“YOUR HIGH EXCELLENCY: On the Nijni Novgorod, of the Volunteer Fleet, which is to sail from the Port of Odessa on the 20th of March, 1888, there is a party of five hundred and twenty-five convicts banished to the island of Sakhalin. Among these prisoners banished to penal servitude are the political offenders Vasilli Volunof, Sergei Kuzin, Ivan Meisner, and Stanilaus Khrenofski. In notifying you of this fact, the chief prison administration has the honour respectfully to request that you make arrangements to confine these political offenders

## The Reputation of Sakhalin

not in a separate group by themselves, but in the cells of other (common criminal) convicts. In making the arrangements for confining these criminals in prison and employing them in work, no distinction whatever must be made between them and other criminals, except in the matter of surveillance, which must be of the strictest character. Neither must any difference be made between them and other convicts in respect to punishments inflicted for violations of prison discipline. You will not fail to inform the chief prison administration of the manner in which the above political offenders are distributed on the island of Sakhalin, and to forward reports in regard to their behaviour.

“ [Signed] M. GALKINE WRASSKOY,

*“ Director of the Chief Prison Administration.”*

It is said, though I have not seen the original authority for the statement, that not long after their arrival two of these political offenders, Vassilli Volunof and Ivan Meisner, in pursuance of these directions and for what is alleged to have been only a minor offence—namely, declining to show the usual form of respect exacted by rule from all prisoners towards the prison officials—underwent the punishment and degradation of flogging, just as would have been in-

## Prisoners of Russia

flicted upon any ordinary criminal convict under similar circumstances.

From among a number of statements recently published in English newspapers respecting Sakhalin, here is an extract from an article in the Sun of July 25, 1893:

"According to an east Siberian paper (which would presumably not be allowed to concoct such a story), so terrible a state of affairs has prevailed on the island of Sakhalin that the Governor had recently to interfere for the protection of prisoners against minor prison officials. A number of the former are stated to have deliberately maimed themselves in order to get free of certain cruel warders. Others fled into the impenetrable forests, where they suffered all the horrors of hunger. In a satchel belonging to a fugitive convict who had been hunted down were found some pieces of human flesh; and other cases of cannibalism have been reported."

Another, from the London Standard for July, 1895, said:

"ST. PETERSBURG, *Friday Night.*

"Vague rumours of the unsatisfactory state of the convict prison of Onor, on the island of Sakhalin, having reached St. Petersburg, a Government Commission was instituted some time ago to inquire into the matter. The report is

## The Reputation of Sakhalin

now to hand, and reveals a terrible tale of suffering and crime. Instances without number are recorded of merciless beatings and lopping off of fingers and arms by sabre cuts. While cannibalism, under stress of famine, is a common occurrence, murder followed by cannibalism is also frequently committed with the sole object of putting an end to the misery of existence at Onor. And instances are related where several convicts disputed before the authorities for the guilt of a murder.

“ During the whole of 1892 there was an almost continuous string of convoys with corpses of convicts passing from Onor to Rykovskaya, the residence of the authorities, and the bodies were so mutilated, and presented so pitiful a spectacle, that the report says the spectators could not look upon them without tears. No inquiries, however, were made, and the bodies were simply buried without further ado. Neither of the two doctors living at Rykovskaya ever visited Onor. In 1893 a band of convicts was handed over to an inspector, who could neither read nor write, to construct a road from Onor to Rykovskaya. If any convict failed in his work, he was at once put on half-rations the next day, followed by a third of rations, and when he could work no more the inspector finished him with a revolver bullet,

## Prisoners of Russia

and entered his death in the books as from disease.

“The principal author and encourager of all these atrocities is the convict Rhakoff, who is a favourite of the commandant of the district, and has been made inspector-general. He has lately been recommended for good service, and he and all his colleagues have succeeded hitherto in keeping their misdeeds secret from the world. The above details are not, it must be noted, a convict’s tale, but are taken from an official Government report.”

From the quotations given I think it will be seen that, if the worst cruelties in Siberia proper be added together, they still fall short of the reputation of Sakhalin.

As my residence on the island was chiefly in that part of it which was the most notorious, which is, indeed, the most distant penal settlement in the whole Russian Empire, and was within the worst period of its history, my own personal experience there may possess some interest.

## CHAPTER V

### KORSAKOFFSK WAYS

AT the house of the Governor of Korsakoffsk Prison, Madame S——, his good wife, and a number of officers, military and civil, were waiting to receive him; and this they did with all the boisterous and reckless affection which Russians allow themselves everywhere, but which only at the more distant stations in and beyond Siberia rises to the highest level of unrestraint.

Closely following us, came pouring in the guests the Governor had invited from the Baikall, between whom and the household Captain L—— acted as master of ceremonies. His manner of introducing everybody to everybody else seemed to say, "Now, gentlemen, the Baikall waits for nobody—we've only an hour before us, so make the most of your time and don't lose a moment—a short life and a merry one's the word. So here's to your healths, ladies and gentlemen, let us all be happy!"

A Manchester engineer pulling the lever in

## Prisoners of Russia

a cotton-mill couldn't have been more successful in starting a general clatter than the captain was. Darting about in every direction he distributed stimulating and lubricating liquids. Tongues moved as swiftly and noisily as shuttles. Whether in Russian, German, or French, I took it for granted that the person talking to me could himself hear what he said, even if I could not, so I smiled approvingly, interposed occasionally an agreeable Russian monosyllable at what I judged to be appropriate moments, but chiefly listened. To my amusement I afterward learned that I was a "charming conversationalist" and "so very intelligent."

Too various to enumerate were the refreshments which were displayed upon a side-table, on one end of which was the merry and inevitable samovar, and at the other, as a rival attraction, a small army of little glasses and numerous bottles. As there were no servants present, we all helped ourselves and each other to what we liked best, and to a degree which excited my apprehension.

Among the many groups in which the company now seemed to divide, by far the largest seemed to consist entirely of resident officials. Of this group the Governor was the centre. With marked and growing excitement they were all listening to an officer who had but just en-

## Korsakoffsk Ways

tered the room and in great haste had made his way direct to the Governor, as if on business of sudden importance. I noticed that there was a great commotion among them, as if the newly arrived officer had brought some very alarming information. With one member of this group, who was in the medical service, I had just before had a very cordial conversation, so, as they began to separate, I gave him an opportunity of enlightening me on the point which had so absorbed their attention. Taking me by the arm and leading me to a quiet, dark corner of the veranda, he said in a confidential tone, "Now, you mustn't appear to know a word about this. It is a great secret. It has just been discovered that five of our very worst convicts, all guilty of repeated local murders, have escaped from the prison. They are the most incorrigible assassins, and wouldn't hesitate at anything. You see, they have nothing to lose, and perhaps everything to gain, as they may think, so it is impossible to say what desperate thing they may not attempt. Not the slightest trace has been found of them, and of course no person or building is safe so long as these ruffians are at large.

"They can conceal themselves separately in the forests by day, and at night may combine, set fire to the prison, the Governor's house or the store-houses, or in the darkness murder

## Prisoners of Russia

whoever they can. Unfortunately these people know that if they fail and are caught, the worst punishment the law allows us to give them in Sakhalin is simply a flogging. You see, it's uncomfortable for all of us, and the worst of it for me is, that I am the last officer who went through their Kamera before they were missed. I observed no trace of their intention, although they must have been working away at their mining preparations for several days. It is evident that there is a widespread conspiracy, and God only knows what may happen even before this night is over."

Just then the dining-room doors were slid back, revealing to my astonishment a long table surrounded by closely set chairs, with indications of a formal dinner for the party I thought so surfeited.

The other guests, who had previously dined with me on the steamer, did not seem to share my surprise in the slightest, so I tried to conceal it, and, as everybody squeezed into the first chair he came to, the doctor and I sat down together. He seemed to feel a wonderful interest and delight in meeting a *confrère* from such distant regions, and as he also had pursued part of his studies at the Allgemeines Krankenhaus in Vienna, we had a good many reminiscences of mutual interest.

## Korsakoffsk Ways

He had just been relieved of his duties as Medical Officer of the Prison, and was to start for Alexandrovsk that very night on the Baikall, so the present occasion was his last and final farewell to Korsakoffsk, where he was so evidently popular. He was just the man above all others who was able to tell me what I most wanted to know, but about which I was least inclined to ask other and less communicative officers. I learned from him a great many things which were invaluable as guides in my subsequent investigations. He begged me to go on with him to Alexandrovsk, or to come later and be his guest till the end of the summer, as he had no family and was sadly in want of company.

The end of the numerous courses at this our third dinner was not reached till about eleven o'clock, after which my friends Tartsoff and Schouvaloff, in a further conversation, promised that they would speak to General K—— about me, and would insure me a hearty reception by him if I should subsequently visit Alexandrovsk.

As there was no second story to the Governor's house, and all the doors but one were thrown open, I inferred that his bed-room was the only one in the building. I expressed my fears of incommoding the household by my visit, to our universal friend, Captain L——, but he

## Prisoners of Russia

told me to be entirely easy on that point—that the Governor intended me to have the large room occupying the entire street frontage of the house. After the guests of the evening had gone, a cot and all that I might require would be arranged for me, while my heavier luggage could remain accessible in the large entrance hall just outside. I was evidently to be treated like a prince, and was expected to stay till the end of the summer.

From the Baikall was now heard a shrill, prolonged whistle, which the cunning captain had preconcerted should not be blown till midnight, instead of at ten o'clock, as had been announced. Though the whistle caused considerable flurry among the guests, it was even then in reality only the signal and excuse for another health-drinking. In ten minutes another whistle sounded, and about five minutes later came three whistles in succession, each of which was more prolonged than either of the previous ones. This was really the last and final notice that the steamer was ready to start. The *droschkis* waiting at the door were rapidly filled with the merry throng, the Governor himself accompanying them to the pier.

This was the first opportunity I had for anything like a chat with my future hostess, who, knowing that the other guests would remain

## Korsakoffsk Ways

but a short time, had very properly given them her chief attention. Little was the time she had had to talk even to them, indeed, for this sudden inrush of visitors had been entirely a surprise to her. She had not even had the slightest intimation of the time of the arrival of the Baikall. However, she had extemporized her lavish entertainment, had presided at the dinner-table, had led the dance with the captain, and had taken her turn at the piano, playing waltzes and sonatas at intervals with equal finish of execution.

I need scarcely say, perhaps, that bed-rooms, as such, are not a sacred institution in the English and American sense in any part of Russia, much less in Siberia and beyond. It was not at all surprising to me, therefore, when, on the return of the Governor, the clumsy maid dragged a cot into the front room, which was the highway to all the other apartments in the house, and proceeded to make up my bed there, quickly converting one of the corners of it into a sleeping place with the further aid of certain portable items.

As we were all tired out, I bade Madame S—— good-night with but very little ceremony, and was shown to my corner by the Governor.

Just as I had begun to undress, he returned to my room, and without the slightest explana-

## Prisoners of Russia

tion, with a half-apologetic and good-natured smile, showed me the working of a large revolver, and, putting it at half-cock, placed it under my pillow. Then, stepping to a rack in the entrance hall, he brought me a walking-stick, shaped like a battle-axe, made of a beautifully polished solid piece of steel. This he placed ready to hand at the right side of my cot, whereupon, having seen that my matches and candle were in good order, he impressed upon me that, whatever happened, I must in no case whatever open a window. With a cheerful "bonne nuit" he left me to my own reflections.

The strangeness of everything, the sudden contrast with the previous boisterous jollity of the evening, was very impressive now that I was left all alone.

"Well," thought I, "this ought to suit me. It's so very disagreeable, and then it's so unusual. The Baikall's gone, and in any case, whatever's coming, I'm in for it. I wanted a new sensation and I've got it. Yes, after all I rather like it, and I am glad I came." Saying this aloud, just for company, I blew out the candle, and turned over with a violent determination to go right to sleep. I think that I had almost succeeded in this, but the next thing I was quite sure of, was a patterning sound of feet, of muffled voices, and of what seemed like an occasional

## Korsakoffsk Ways

clank, clank, as of a heavy chain near one of my windows. The clank sounded as if it had occurred by accident; the other noises I thought were being carefully repressed. The secret the doctor had confided to me, with the parting precautions of the Governor, at once flashed before my mind, and in an instant I struck a light to let the rascals know that we were ready for action.

The length of my room, as already stated, took in nearly the whole width of the house, and its height extended to the roof. The ceiling, like the walls, was simply made of unseasoned pine-boards; the floor as rough as if it had been trodden by horses. The day had been an unusually warm one, and, the house being nearly new, the resinous odour from new and oozing pine-boards was most suffocating.

About half-past two I became aware that I must have fallen asleep. For at that hour, in the blackest of darkness, I was startled by I knew not what. Intently listening, I could hear suppressed voices just outside my window, and, as before, an occasional clank as of a convict's chain. As I ran my ear along the wall, I heard a crackling sound, but could not tell whether it was from fire or the crushing of light sticks and stubble under heavy feet.

I was not going to be simple enough to disturb the Governor by what might be a foolish

## Prisoners of Russia

alarm, so I simply lighted a cigarette and awaited events. After a while, as none was forthcoming, I made my way into the front hall, and thence into the vestibule, where, through the little windows on either side the heavily barred front door, I could just discover right across the road a military sentinel. It afterward transpired that these various alarms had come simply from the guard making the usual relief; the clank had been from the sabre of a subaltern in command.

Early in the morning, a male domestic entered my room without knocking, and with a great deal of unnecessary noise and clatter unfastened the heavily barred shutters, but, consistently with Russian notions of ventilation, he never ventured to open one of the windows. He was a murderer.

About eight o'clock, a repulsive female servant crept stealthily to the side of my bed, bringing the usual morning cup of tea, and then without a word slid out again. She was a murderer.

After such a weird and gloomy night, the bright sunshine, as it poured into my room, gave me new life, and awakened an impatient desire to reconnoitre my strange and mysterious surroundings. By the help of my toy wash-basin, which, like all imported articles in Siberia,

## Korsakoffsk Ways

except Huntley & Palmer's biscuits, was either French or German, I managed to give myself a Russian wipe. I then dressed, and took a general look about the premises.

From the street, entrance to the other two rooms in the Governor's one-storied house or bungalow could only be gained through my apartment, which was evidently the general reception-room.

A large and very elegant inlaid desk, apparently in constant official use, as well as other equally elegant articles of furniture, contrasted strangely with the bare board walls and rough floor of this spacious hall. This beautiful furniture, I afterward found, like all the rest of it in the house, except the mirrors of which Russians are so fond, had been made by skilled exiles and convicts in the cabinet department of the prison directly opposite.

In this same room, on a little book-shelf hard to reach, were several dusty books, numbering in all perhaps a couple of dozen. Some were French, some were German; there were also five volumes of the Tauchnitz edition, three being by Thackeray and two by Dickens, but they all had the appearance of being neglected souvenirs of the school days of long ago, suggestive of a past and distant home life probably not far from St. Petersburg.

## Prisoners of Russia

As the Governor, in urging upon me this visit, had particularly emphasized the pleasure his wife would have in practising upon me her rusty English, I inferred, and rightly, that she had been the only reader of these sadly tattered-looking books. Indeed, I found nobody else in the place who would have pretended to be able to read them.

The back part of the house had a very spacious uncovered piazza, with steps to the garden, which contained a few wild flowers, and also a few currant- and gooseberry-bushes, but with no fruit upon them fit to eat. None of the flowers had any perfume, but their growth was so luxuriant that the principal work of the gardener was not cultivating them, but thinning them and keeping them within their proper bounds.

In a corner of the garden, close beside the house, was an extemporized tent or summer-house. This was used as a dining-room and as the general rendezvous on all occasions.

Observing the samovar steaming inside the tent, I limited my stroll to its immediate vicinity, and at about half-past nine was met by the Governor, who came down the steps rubbing his eyes and giving me a soldier's hearty greeting.

Madame S—— quickly followed, and as we sat down in the fresh morning air to a delicious *al fresco* breakfast, weird memories of the night

## Korsakoffsk Ways

quickly vanished. I felt some interest in this meeting, as it was my initiation into the little family circle of which I was now to be a member. My first act at table was a grave and unfortunate blunder.

Madame S—— was reaching out for an egg. Seeing this, I took up a salt-cellar to pass across the table to her. With a quick movement she warded off my intention, crossed herself, and looked not only astonished but alarmed. "Do you not know," she asked, "how extremely unlucky it is to pass the salt to any one across the table?"

The dishes were brought on by another repulsive-looking domestic, resembling the one who had brought me my early tea. She also, I found, was a murderer. My hostess informed me that she was observing a church fast, which had continued two weeks, but would come to an end at noon on the following day, Sunday. She took this occasion to express very cordially her delight at my coming, and assured me that it would be such a pleasure and unprecedented break in the monotony of Korsakoffsk, that the whole settlement would be grateful to me for my visit.

Now came a little official incident, strikingly characteristic. Directly Madame S—— had left

## Prisoners of Russia

the table, an official approached with a military salute, although otherwise he did not give me the impression of being an officer. His aspect was exceedingly forbidding, and this effect was further enhanced by the fact that he wore conspicuously a pistol in his belt, had a huge short-handled, iron-knobbed whip in his hand, and was closely attended by a tremendously large, savage-looking dog. The animal was something between a boar-hound and an English mastiff, and between its face and that of its master there was considerable resemblance. This man was one of the overseers, come to make to the Governor his usual morning report.

As this was the man's first official interview with his superior since his return, there were a great many questions, answers, and discussions, and at times both of them became a good deal excited. This was especially the case when the topic of the escape and plans for the capture of the five prisoners who had so securely got away into the forest was reached.

The Governor seemed to think that if he had been at home the event would not have happened at all, and, as this overseer was at the time in command of the prison, he was roundly berated.

The history of this officer was that of many other overseers, and every one of his features

## Korsakoffsk Ways

told the story. I found that he had special reasons for alarm over this incident, because, previous to its occurrence, he had almost daily been expecting promotion.

Every successful escape from a Siberian prison has to be strictly reported all the way up to the Administration in Chief at St. Petersburg; such an event affects the record of every official, from the lowest to the highest, within whose jurisdiction the escape occurs; and it is looked upon as scarcely less of a crime in the officials in whose command it happens than in the prisoners who perpetrate it. Few things can happen in the career of any official which are so sure to retard his promotion. Hence, in the momentary chagrin and irritation, mutual recrimination was prevalent.

A warder who now approached was gruffly halted by the Governor until the interview was ended. He then came forward, presenting a basin of soup. The Governor hastily inspected it, tasted it, passed it to me, and made a sign to the warder, who immediately retreated.

This was the prison soup for the day, which was never served out until thus tested. A specimen loaf of black bread also accompanied it. This testing of the daily bread and soup, and receiving the report of the chief overseer, I found to be a part of the Governor's daily rou-

## Prisoners of Russia

tine, always attended to at the breakfast-table. The bread was the same as that supplied to our own table and to that of all the officers.

One of the multifarious functions of the Governor was that of Chief of the Post and Telegraph Departments. He had the right to examine, and generally did examine, every letter, package, or telegram going or coming. In the case of exiles or convicts, this right became a duty, and the task was not a light one.

This inspection was reserved chiefly for odd times and rainy days. As I was under no more restraint in this matter than in any other, I learned much which I am bound to regard as confidential.

I am, however, free to remark that if any novelist in want of a subject or a plot should get hold of a single heap of the exiles' letters he might find enough to last him the rest of his life.

In one corner of my room was a heap of letters, opened, but condemned never to be delivered. Imagine the trouble and thought it had taken to get any one of those letters written, the anxious hopes which by day and by night had followed them on their way. A skeleton in that corner, with its always cynical grin, would have been a cheerful object compared with this heap of dead hopes, with its constant and pathetic

## Korsakoffsk Ways

suggestiveness. I took the liberty of covering them with a table-cloth, which entirely concealed them, remarking to the Governor that it would "keep the dust from them."

To what extent this espionage is practised upon the communications of minor officials and their wives, I could not exactly say, but I know this: it is always part of the routine of a penal settlement, and adds one more to the many items which make the lives of the officials themselves and of all concerned unenviable.

After breakfast the Governor, in faultless uniform, left for the police court, of which he was president, and I was left to stroll about wherever I liked and to amuse myself in my own way until dinner-time.

To avoid causing my hostess inconvenience by any want of punctuality, I asked her before starting what was the usual dinner-hour. With a merry laugh she made a reply which I thought both amusing and significant. "In Korsakoffsk time is not very important. We usually sit down to dinner punctually at half-past one, or at two, or about three o'clock, or we may have dinner several times during the day, all just as it happens. Perhaps to-day you had better be back about two o'clock." I afterward found that she had stated the case most accurately.

## Prisoners of Russia

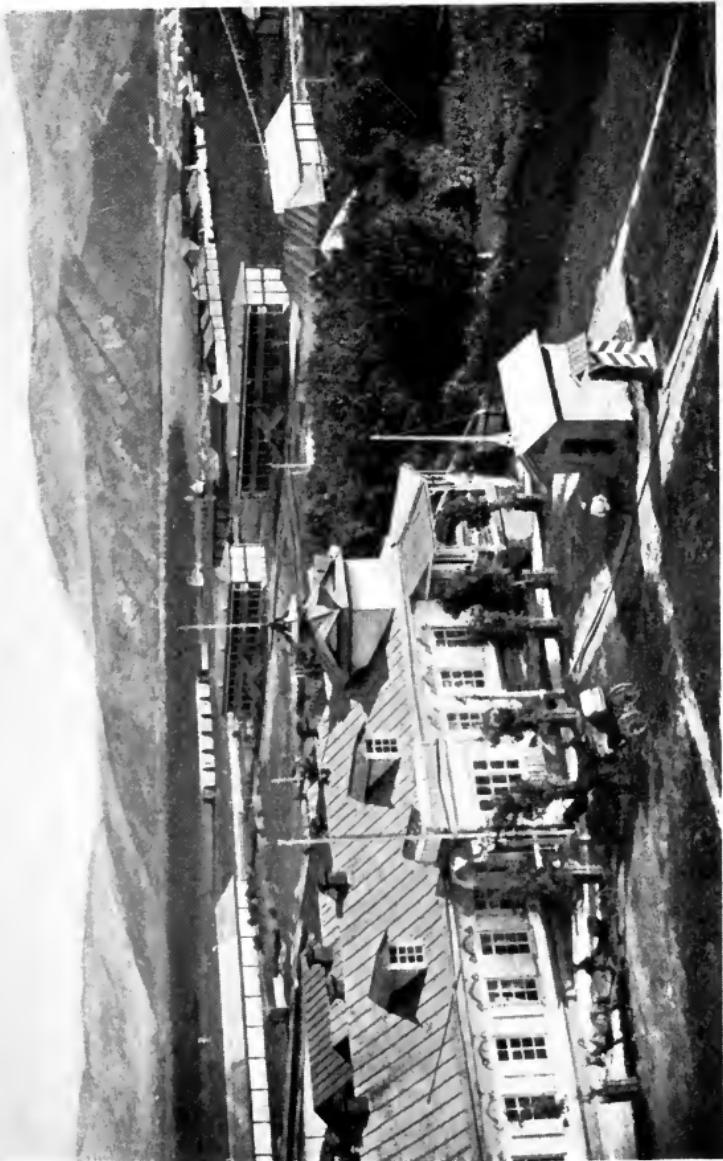
With my tether so long and so loose, my temptation was to make straight for the prison and, as is my wont in strange places, to worm my way without hesitation into every nook and cranny not usually seen by casual or foreign visitors. I decided that my wisest course, however, would be to avoid carefully even the slightest display of curiosity. I would neither pry nor inquire into anything of an official nature, but quietly bide my time and let things come to me in their ordinary and inevitable course.

The settlement of Korsakoffsk, though having the main features common to all small Siberian towns, is in almost every respect decidedly superior to the larger number of them.

Its situation is picturesque, healthful, and romantic. Its main street is a steady ascent up the middle line of a hill from the sea front at its base to its summit. The street is flanked on one side by a deep gorge, and on the other by a pretty but narrow valley. Beyond these, on either side, rise other hills higher and higher in succession. Beyond the apex of the hill which the street ascends are lofty mountains forming an amphitheatre, in the centre of which nestles Korsakoffsk, every part of it looking down upon the splendid Aniva Bay.

On ascending the main street, on the right and left are two buildings of considerable archi-

The Governor's house, Korsakoffsk.





## Korsakoffsk Ways

tectural pretension of the strictly Russian type. They are the offices of the Police and of the General Administration. Farther up are the church, and the houses of various officials. Overlooking all the others, within its large garden inclosure, is the residence of the Governor, which also commands an unbroken view of the magnificent bay.

On the left side of the corresponding part of the street runs a long line of blank and dreary-looking buildings, which might be taken for warehouses. Their many windows, which are high up in the walls, are thickly crossed with iron bars. Continuous with these, and exactly opposite the house of the Governor, is a long, somewhat lower building in front of which is a raised sidewalk with sentry-boxes at each end, between which sentinels are pacing.

In front of this platform is a formidable array of cannon with stacks of arms between them. Just beyond is a huge, handsome, and imposing gate-way, with a little door within the massive gates at which two sentries are standing. Beyond this again, and continuous with it at a right angle, runs a huge stockade, from within which a watch-tower rises with fine effect from the highest point of the hill-crest, which for many acres beyond and to the left is similarly inclosed.

## Prisoners of Russia

All these long lines of buildings inclosing the entire crest of the hill form the prison, the imposing gate-way I have described forming its main entrance. This, with the guard-house beside it, is just opposite the house of the Governor.

I was glad to find that from a sanitary and æsthetic point of view the exercise grounds and other open areas within the prison occupy the choicest spot in the whole settlement, and have the finest outlook to be found in that beautiful region.

On a cross-street, about half-way up the main street to the left, in line with the lower part of the prison, is the hospital. On the same side of the hill are the military barracks and parade-ground, also the separate bath-houses, for prisoners, for soldiers, and for the officials respectively.

On the acclivity just across the valley to the left are the houses of most of the military and other officers. The smaller houses with their little gardens all along the valley on either side northward, as also the smaller buildings dotting the hill in every direction, in their own private gardens, are the private homes of exiles and other free convicts.

Excepting only the chimneys, all the houses are built of wood, which in its natural state as-

## Korsakoffsk Ways

sumes a sombre tint, giving to the settlement an aspect of monotonous gloom. This effect is deepened by the fact that the street-fronts of the houses are blank, the entrances being on the side. Neither on my first stroll, nor at any time, except on a Sunday, have I ever seen on the street more than three persons, and of these not one would be a woman.

The bay, visible from every point, though in itself magnificent, has upon its broad expanse not a single sail or boat, nor any sign of human life.

To this solitude, I judged, the cordiality of my reception might be partly due. The chief difference, apparently, between the officials and the convicts was that between being assigned and being committed.

Punctually, as madame had indicated to me, we sat down to dinner somewhere about half-past one or half-past two, to the bewildering succession of courses which constitute a Russian dinner. In the evening, still more behind the time appointed, madame came to me in the garden with many apologies for the lateness of the supper. It being Saturday evening, and especially a fast-time, she had been obliged to go to church, and, as this was also the last day for the confession which was indispensable to tomorrow's communion, the service had been an

## Prisoners of Russia

unusually long one. This Saturday evening service was an interesting reminder that the Greek Church, like the Abyssinian, and unlike some more modern sects, holds to the continued validity of the whole decalogue, not excluding the fourth commandment, the observance of which is so much emphasized in the Scripture context. In the same connection it was a very noticeable fact that the evening of Saturday was the only one on which no visitors called.

When smoking on the veranda at sunset, I gradually became aware of what seemed distant music ebbing and flowing on the still evening air from some part of the hillside below us.

It is unnecessary to remark to those who have been in Russia that in the solemn and effective rendering of sacred music, which is exclusively vocal, the Russians are altogether unequalled. Madame S—— explained to me that the music we heard was from the parade-ground. In the Russian Army, as in the Russian Navy, at the close of evening parade a regimental choir, which here takes the place of a regimental band, leads the entire command in a choral rendering of the Lord's Prayer, and sometimes of other parts of the Greek liturgy. In the German Navy I have observed a somewhat similar custom. This was done not only on Saturday

## Korsakoffsk Ways

night and Sunday night, but on every evening throughout the week. The service occurring just after our supper, it became one of the regular events to which I looked forward with ever-increasing pleasure.

## CHAPTER VI

### MY FIRST SUNDAY IN KORSAKOFFSK

ON my first Sunday in Korsakoffsk, I found breakfast on the table earlier than before, but, excepting myself, nobody sat down to it. This abstinence on the part of the household I found to be preparatory to the communion, which was to form part of the service that morning.

Just as the last and most vigorous of the three preliminary bell-ringings from the church commenced, Madame S—— hurriedly excused herself and hastened to the church, followed soon after by the Governor, who left me to follow on at my leisure, if so inclined.

The brilliant sunshine, the bright and beautiful colours of the wild flowers overrunning the garden, the flashing, sparkling surface of the sea beyond, and the spotless blue of the sky, suggested to my mind such grateful aspiration to their Giver, that it cost me quite an effort to quit my contemplation for the church and its more ostensible worship. On reaching the building, I found the assemblage in front, in

## My First Sunday in Korsakoffsk

various groups, as motley and sadly suggestive as could be found in any spot on this wide world. In the last degree it was picturesque and pathetic. Inside, as in all Greek churches, there were no seats, not even one for the Governor. Here, in a degree rarely seen in other lands which are Christian, and never in heathen countries, the church is a place in which all worshippers share and share alike; to this, however, I was prepared to find an exception in Korsakoffsk. The church was crowded to the doors, the congregation numbering about three or four hundred. The only difference in the treatment of the worshippers had its good reason. This was a strip of carpet on the stone pavement for the wives and daughters of the officers, used as a protection for their knees and dresses during their many and prolonged genuflexions.

The Sunday-morning toilets of these free convicts and their families show that great pains are taken by each person to wear something or other which is both an ornament and a souvenir of a former home. Thus, by a bodice, a cravat, an apron, a quaint piece of jewellery, or what not, all of the most ancient date even where they came from, this little out-of-the-world congregation was linked not only with the most distant provinces of Russia, but even with many coun-

## Prisoners of Russia

tries of Europe besides. What diversity! What picturesqueness! What pathos! in these cherished little mementoes they had preserved through all their thousands of miles of travel under conditions so painfully adverse! The humanness of it, the wholesome moral significance of it, impressed me immensely—so much so that a certain ludicrous feature in the conglomeration was hardly thought of till afterward. The physiognomy of this congregation would have been a mine to my old friend, Professor Lombroso.

In the faces of some, murder was as visible as if red-hot branding irons had burned and stamped “Cain” across every feature. Respecting the larger number, however, I am bound to admit that my principal wonder was how these persons could have come to Sakhalin at all. In their manners the diversity was less, deportment being a prime feature in the daily conduct of all of them. As for the priest, I have rarely seen one even in the larger cities of Russia whose appearance was at once so refined and sympathetic. A Græco-Roman nose, a high forehead, a superbly luxuriant beard, a pale complexion, manners gentle and devout, all combined to suggest in his general aspect the type adopted by the old masters in their representations of the Christ.

## My First Sunday in Korsakoffsk

His vestments were, for such a poor place, surprisingly rich and beautiful. Above all, the impression of simplicity and sincerity in both priest and people was so predominant, that a casual spectator could not escape from joining in the general devotion. Fully half of the service was read by laymen. And who were they? One had committed a murder, as I afterward learned; the other, a crime if possible still more revolting. Had I known this at the time, I think that the pathos of it all would have been barely supportable. The choral part of the service was good, as in Russian churches it almost invariably is; but not so good, I thought, as that of the troops I had heard on the previous evening.

The church choir, which was antiphonal, and therefore a large one, could not, however, include any members of the military choir, as soldiers in the imperial service are not allowed to associate openly with murderers, exiles, or any other convicts, under any circumstances whatever.

There were here and there in the congregation young and middle-aged men who by their dress, manner, and general appearance, just as they stood, would be judged to be gentlemen anywhere. I found that these were good-conduct men engaged chiefly as clerks and book-keepers in the offices of the Administration.

## Prisoners of Russia

As the official documents concerning every convict are not only in duplicate, but in double duplicate, the staff of clerks employed is a comparatively large one, and between many of these and their superior officers the relations have to be quite confidential. To men in these positions, special privileges are granted, their lives being thus made as easy and agreeable as the regulations will allow—such, indeed, as many free people might envy. The church attendance of the officials on Sunday morning is part of the regulations. In the case of the free convicts, however, it is entirely voluntary. On the point of sincerity one sinner may hardly allow himself to judge others, but what seemed like sincerity was so conspicuous that under its spell my own heart was quickly brought into unison with what I felt to be a common worship. In that attitude of higher communion came a sense of fellowship—a fellowship in sacrifice; a sacrifice as of broken hearts and contrite spirits.

At a certain point in the service, the priest came forward and, standing on the lowest chancel step, which in the Greek Church is used in rightful preference to a pulpit, gave a plain, practical gospel address. It was a model at least in this—that it lasted only about ten minutes. This address was followed by the administration of the communion service.

## My First Sunday in Korsakoffsk

One feature in fine contrast to the custom in Protestant communions is this—that the flock is first, the shepherd next; it was the children, not the priest, who were the first recipients of the elements. This struck me as highly consistent and suggestive. The elements employed were: bread, which is always made expressly for the purpose by the priest's wife; wine, to which are added three parts of water, which is warm, in imitation of the blood which flowed from the Saviour's wounded side. The bread, the wine, and the water being duly mixed together in a chalice, the priest, with a small silver spoon, puts a little of the mixture into the mouths of the infants held by the mothers in a row at the chancel steps. The cross having been put to their lips, they were dismissed to their homes.

After a short interval of music by the choir, the Royal Gates were thrown back, and the priest reappeared, carrying, on a level with his face, a chalice covered with a napkin. Addressing the communicants, he said: "In the fear of the Lord and in peace, come ye."

This was followed by a liturgical confession repeated in unison.

At each communion the priest said: "The servant of God . . . communicates in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The administration was the same as de-

## Prisoners of Russia

scribed in the case of the infants, with this difference, that a lay reader, who assisted the priest, held under the chin of the person communicating a little silk serviette, with which he afterward wiped the lips of the communicant, who then kissed the edge of the chalice and the cross which the priest put to his lips.

On a table in the east corner of the church was a pile of exquisitely white little loaves, covered all over with little spear-shaped incisions. On returning to their places a number of the communicants called at this table and purchased one or more of these rolls, which they carefully wrapped in white linen for friends or others unable to attend the church.

I was once allowed to go behind the Royal Gates, in what might be termed the Holy of Holies, both before and during the whole of a communion service in the largest and most important of the churches in St. Petersburg. On a table in a recess close behind me was a large pile of these little rolls with a cross stamped on them. A short liturgy was said over them by a deacon, who then with a spear-shaped knife carefully made on each of them a number of the spear-shaped incisions I have mentioned. They represent the spear-wounds in the Saviour's body. The pieces cut out were kept to be mixed with the wine and water.

## My First Sunday in Korsakoffsk

In the Greek service the Nicene Creed was used. Much of the litany, also a good part of the post-communion service, was identical with that so familiar to us in the Roman and Anglican churches. Hence, in part, perhaps, the fact that, as I joined with these unfortunates in this service, the consciousness of distance and difference which may come to the reader almost entirely faded from my mind.

As I afterward thought of the hundreds and thousands of murderers who in other Christian countries had been sent with short shrift to their eternal doom by the hands of society within our own time, I could but reflect upon the scene in which I had shared with profound thankfulness for the difference.

The service over, it was pleasant to witness the affectionate adieus, and to watch the pious care with which many of these unfortunates were carrying home to invalid friends and others the sacred bread, a memorial of the one sacrifice made for the sins of the whole world, even for thieves and murderers.

After twelve o'clock it became evident that the Sabbath in its strict sense was at an end. I observed an unusual elongation and elegance in our dinner-table, which seemed suggestive of a general break-up of the fast many had been observing. Within half an hour after our return

## Prisoners of Russia

home, the first of many guests to arrive was our good priest, and I was delighted to have the pleasure of meeting him. The more we were together, the more did he confirm in private the excellent impression he had made upon me in public.

Afterward came in, one by one, several of the officers I had met on the evening of my arrival. Then came the wife and eldest daughter of the priest. The latter, in addressing her mother, used the same word as an American girl would employ—"mamma"—while her father was addressed not only by her, but by everybody else, with the priestly and paternal word "papa." Its use in this case was evidently in part a sincere and respectful term of endearment, as well as of ordinary custom.

Some of the officers' wives who had not before seen the Governor since his return were particularly enthusiastic and cordial in their greetings. It soon appeared that some of the visitors had come not simply to dinner, but, in Siberian fashion, to stay the rest of the day. From one and another of the ladies, I now learned that the festivities which were manifestly imminent were partly in honour of myself, to whom everybody who arrived was promptly presented. Not only a number of the ladies, but several of the officers told me that they had

## My First Sunday in Korsakoffsk

never seen an “Englees” or an “Americana” before, and that I was the first foreigner who had ever stayed in Korsakoffsk for a single night. None of them could pronounce the word “English” as in the vernacular; the word “Americana” required no effort whatever. It being known that I was to be a resident in the settlement for a considerable period, the questions naturally enough were innumerable.

They knew that only as the Governor’s guest could I have come to Korsakoffsk, and I had reasons for suspecting that my host had already chosen to make himself responsible for more than one exaggeration about me, intended to be in my favour. Perhaps the predominant impression which seemed to have gained currency concerning me, especially among the ladies, was that I must be exceedingly rich, for, said they, nobody could travel so far merely for pleasure, unless he had the money to do it with. The interest of my newly made friends extended even to my clothes, which several of them politely asked permission to examine.

A little bell tinkled in the garden tent, and quickly and as informally as by children at a picnic, the seats at the table were occupied. Without loss of time the priest said his apt three-word grace, all crossed themselves, and the preliminary vodka was passed around. Before

## Prisoners of Russia

anybody had time to taste it, however, the alert Governor jumped up, and impulsively proposed "the health of our distinguished guest." They insisted on drinking the toast three times. They seemed to find some amusement in my little response, especially in my reference to the amiable but artful trick by which they had all got three drinks ahead of me at the start. The raw ham, sardines, potato-salad, the cucumbers which were eaten as we eat apples, pickles, caviare, various cold meats, the alternations of vodka and cigarettes, were only to give us appetite. The real dinner itself began with soup, accompanied by tiny hashed meat dumplings, such as I have enjoyed at private native tables in Canton and in some parts of Austria. They were so delicious that they might have made an excellent meal by themselves.

The inevitable huge fish-pie, to refuse which would be equivalent to a courtesy both to the host and to the Russian flag, was followed by boiled beef, roast chicken, and salad, with a good variety of vegetables and pickles, among which beets were conspicuous.

The sweets were blanc-mange, varieties of cream, clotted and otherwise, for which our hostess was famous, a great variety of fruit conserves, jellies, native wild strawberries with cream, and confections, etc. The beverages,

## My First Sunday in Korsakoffsk

which, with cigarettes, were literally forced on one throughout the dinner, included bottled beer, German wines, and champagne. There was one thing which seemed to be quite unheard of there—that was water.

When dessert was reached, a new contingent of friends arrived. For these the table was extended across the path reaching to the grass-plot, and nothing could prevent madame from having them served with every course from the beginning until they caught up with the rest of us.

Talk about the sullenness, the gloominess of the Russian! Only in a Vienna restaurant could one hear such a babel of argument. Talk of the oppression of women in Russia! From the gestures of some of the ladies it seemed that if there was domestic oppression in Korsakoffsk, the ladies were certainly not the victims.

The spontaneity, informality, and enthusiasm of these good people, their overwhelming good-nature, and their courtesy would elsewhere have seemed almost excessive. But the artlessness, the sincerity of it all was magnificent.

About the middle of the afternoon, when the larger number of the guests had excused themselves for a temporary visit to their neighbouring homes, a visiting card was handed to the Governor. This, the first visiting card I had

## Prisoners of Russia

yet seen in Korsakoffsk, was quickly followed by the gentleman announced, who presented himself in the garden attired in full evening costume. The Governor received him in a manner which combined official dignity with courtesy, and, after a little amiable chat, called for a glass and cigarettes.

The visitor, however, taking only a glass of tea, mildly excused himself from smoking, and after only a few minutes' stay, with courteous formality took his departure.

I ascertained that he was a newly arrived doctor, a civilian in the Government service, who had been sent to take medical charge of the civil department of the station, in the place of the other surgeon I have mentioned, who had left on the Baikall. This was his call of ceremony on his chief, to report himself for the duties of the post to which he had been assigned. I suspected that the recent prison escapes had something to do with the change.

As I may have more to say about this good doctor and future friend farther on, I will now merely remark in passing, that I suspected his position to be one requiring considerable tact and self-respect, both of which he exhibited in an admirable degree.

Between six and seven o'clock several of the guests who had absented themselves returned,

## My First Sunday in Korsakoffsk

as is the habit in Korsakoffsk, in time for early supper.

About nine o'clock much larger contingents of visitors arrived, until, with one exception only, every official family of the settlement was represented. The good-natured tact and skill of Madame S—— now more than ever were perpetually manifest. Her brilliant performances of Bach and other classical selections on her piano, which was the only one in the settlement, might have excited the envy of many professional pianists, while her songs were rendered with a voice which, though not strong, was exceedingly sweet and sympathetic.

Two or three of the officers also played in fairly good style, and one or more sang, if not classically, yet with good enough effect to furnish a very agreeable diversion.

Then came the inevitable dancing. The first waltz was led by the Governor and the priest's eldest daughter, a fine buxom girl, though only about sixteen, who, taking after her father, had considerable beauty, and, being the pet of the settlement, was as full of innocent joyousness as good health, good-nature, and complete unrestraint could make her. Eugenie was the only young lady, in the full sense of the word, in the settlement, and in it she was queen. She knew this, and, notwithstanding her naturalness, the

## Prisoners of Russia

consciousness of her power occasionally revealed itself in ways which were exquisitely amusing.

With his prodigious size, his military bearing, and his stentorian voice, there was not in the whole island another officer who, apart from his rank, could so terrify a gang of murderers as could my host the Governor; yet among the smaller playmates of Eugenie there was not one who was more completely her slave.

Alone of all his friends, this child habitually addressed him as Alexandrovitch. The fact is, that there was about this outwardly austere and much-dreaded Governor, a secret, one which he most carefully guarded, just because it was so troublesome to conceal. Beneath all his official severity there was ever beating a heart which was as young and as tender as that of Eugenie. Hence it was that, while so dreaded by some, he was the life and soul of every little tea-party in the settlement. His two selves had never been introduced to each other. Had such an introduction been attempted by anybody, it would have been resented by the official and starched self as a personal indignity.

There were some very amusing attempts by some of the guests to repeat after me my name in English. Failing in this, they tried to convert it into Russian. After numerous revised versions I was at last reduced to Venyamin Villi-

## My First Sunday in Korsakoffsk

yamovitch. By a final vote, however, it was agreed among them that, as it was shorter and more distinctive, I should be called "Misteror," and thereafter, with several of them, plain "Misteror," or "the Mister," was my designation to the end of my visit.

The question next in importance, and in whose discussion the Governor joined, was, whether I intended to write a book and, if so, which of them would I put in it? There was a chorus of "Don't forget me! Put me in," etc., from over a dozen of them. I told them that I never had written a book of travel, and never intended to do so, as I was too lazy to make the exertion, but that if I ever did I should probably put every one of them in it, especially those who would give me their portraits. I knew that none of them had portraits to give; that, if ever I did write a book about Korsakoffsk, I should withhold my comments for at least four or five years, by which time all now on duty there would, according to custom, have been shifted to other posts. Though made lightly, and of my own accord, that promise has been faithfully kept.

One of the ladies said that she had seen me riding horseback the day before, and intended to make the Governor arrange for me to give her some riding lessons.

## Prisoners of Russia

In such ways the "Misteror" was rapidly being installed as a veritable member of the Korsakoffsk colony, with almost all the rights and more than the ordinary privileges thereunto belonging.

The newly appointed civil surgeon of the post did not appear during the evening, but the military surgeon of the garrison did, and by his playing and singing contributed not a little to the general enjoyment. As the priest, like myself, did not dance, we took the opportunity of having considerable conversation together.

As is usual in Russia, particularly in Siberia, the relation of the priest in private seemed to be one of respectful companionship with everybody. My own acquaintance with him gradually ripened into a friendship I trust nothing will ever interrupt.

With great nicety of clerical taste, he and his family left earlier than the other guests, but not before Madame S—— had with proud satisfaction displayed to all the guests a book which had the appearance of a small ledger. It was a book of subscriptions for her day school, an institution for the children of exiles and convicts controlled and supported by her with the help of her visitors and friends. She wished to show some very pleasing entries which had been made in it during the past week, and thus quiet-

## My First Sunday in Korsakoffsk

ly to suggest that these recent examples by guests were worthy of imitation. It was a pleasure to observe that this delicate piece of tactfulness was not without its immediate results. Also, that this excellent charity had from its commencement never lacked habitual sympathy and support from the officials and families of the settlement.

My bed, as I have previously said, was in the room through which every guest must pass on entering or leaving the house, for the idea of a spare bedroom had never entered the head of even the largest householder in the island of Sakhalin.

As soon as the last visitor had departed, I thankfully stretched myself on my little cot, and, forgetful of the previous night, fell quietly into a sleep which was unbroken till morning.

The experiences of any traveller given consecutively in diary form are apt to be tedious in the reading. For the period covering the first few days of my life in Korsakoffsk, I have nevertheless adopted this method, because I have thought that in this way the reader might the more vividly share my impressions as I was being gradually hatched into social existence as a member of this strange, distant, and isolated community.

Following what I am sure will be a general

## Prisoners of Russia

preference, I will hereafter, however, address myself rather to topics, and speak of persons, things, or incidents encountered at different times, my selection being governed chiefly by the questions which have been more commonly put to me since my return.



## CHAPTER VII

### THE KORSAKOFFSK PRISON

To those whose notions of a prison have been gained from massive, imposing, and impregnable structures of solid masonry such as the old Tombs in New York city, the penitentiaries at Sing Sing, or Auburn, or any of the jails in England, the structure of the prison of Korsakoffsk would be both a surprise and a disappointment.

Place such a structure as this Korsakoffsk prison in the suburbs of any town or city in England or America, even in the more western of its States, and not one stranger in fifty would at first sight correctly guess the intention or real use made of it. Eight out of ten of such persons would probably conjecture it to be an extensive block of warehouses for storage, or else a factory, say, of agricultural implements, or something of that sort. The principal objection to the warehouse guess would be the apparent insecurity of the buildings, especially against fire—a defect which, it may be remarked here,

## Prisoners of Russia

is of special consequence in Siberia, where fire, always obtainable by the most destitute persons, is more frequently employed than perhaps in any other country as a weapon of resentment and revenge, and also to facilitate robbery and murder, and the escape of the culprits amid the general excitement and confusion.

The prison of Korsakoffsk consists of long ranges of buildings which completely inclose an irregular quadrangle of some two or three acres on the summit of the hill on which the settlement is built. These buildings, like nearly all the prisons in Siberia, are, with the exception of the chimneys, constructed exclusively of wood, which is left in its natural state and therefore quickly acquires an appearance of great shabbiness.

Nearly all the buildings used for the lodgment or confinement of prisoners are single-storied, and, except on the north and west sides, the prison buildings at Korsakoffsk abut directly upon the street or open country. On the north and west sides they are surrounded by a stockade of sharply pointed timbers about eight or ten feet high. Even on the north side, where the stockade is supplemented by a trench, the fence seems chiefly intended to indicate that persons are requested not to pass that way. As a protection to an apple-orchard, it would simply

## The Korsakoffsk Prison

offer an additional temptation to a daring school-boy. This apparent insecurity plainly points to the fact, so well known to all concerned, that the fire is even hotter than the frying-pan. The temptations to escape from the prison into the forests are so tempered by the terrible dangers incident to success, that only when desperation engenders madness will a convict venture on such an enterprise.

The immense irregular quadrangle inclosed within the prison buildings is divided into three smaller ones—the northern, the central, and the southern. The northern is again divided into other quadrangles or yards, each of which is devoted to a special class of prisoners.

The buildings along the southern and eastern portion of the southern quadrangle are of two stories, and are used chiefly as workshops. In these there are several departments. They include carpenter's, cabinet-maker's, shoemaker's, and tailor's shops, the latter being the largest. In the cabinet-maker's shop was made the exquisite furniture of the Governor's house, which I have referred to, and excellent specimens of its work are seen in the police court and in other official buildings. I saw in this shop some capital fretwork and carving for the outside of a new government building then under construction opposite the police court. The

## Prisoners of Russia

skilled workmen in this shop, I was told, received special bonuses; and, so far as their general appearance and demeanour was concerned, there was little or nothing in that shop to suggest the idea of penal servitude. A considerable proportion of these men lived in their own cottages in the vicinity, and went to and fro as mechanics would do in ordinary life anywhere.

With the carpenters it was much the same, except that, as the nature of their work made it necessary to make frequent and irregular trips between the shop and buildings under construction, a greater air of freedom was observed among them.

Being myself very fond of mechanical work when it is done by somebody else, I made frequent visits to the large building then under construction. The principal hindrance to such visits in my own mind was the regulation according to which on my approach every workman near me would stop work, doff his cap, come to the position of attention with eyes fixed on the ground, and so remain until I motioned him to resume his work again. These men, like all Russian carpenters, were particularly skilful in the use of the adze and hatchet, and I was very fond of watching their clever performances in this particular.

If I happened to meet any of them in the

## The Korsakoffsk Prison

street, and they had a load which made a salute impracticable, they would very properly attend to their work without taking notice of me.

In the boot-and-shoe shops, and in the tailoring shop, there was a prevailing tone of restraint. The shops in these departments reminded me of the corresponding workshops I have visited in various State prisons in America, especially in the States of New York and Ohio, except that in everything the Korsakoffsk shops exhibited incomparably less neatness, order, and method, and that the principle of silence was not so rigidly maintained even during official visits.

For the number of men employed the air space was more than adequate, and vastly greater than I have seen in the shops and lodgings of free working people in St. Petersburg, and more particularly in Moscow.

In the southern quadrangle are situated the only private or solitary cells I was able to find in any part of the prison. I do not undertake to say that no other solitary cells existed there. I could hardly command every door in the establishment to be opened, hence I merely say that in the course of my free wanderings about the institution I did not succeed in discovering any others, not even in the parts of the prison in which were pointed out to me the most desperate of all the criminals in the prison, who were

## Prisoners of Russia

under special restraint. The restraint in all these cases was of quite a different kind, partly, I thought, as a matter of economy. The only solitary cells I did find were to my surprise not only in this most privileged quadrangle, but, properly speaking, not cells at all. Further, instead of being an extra punishment, they were granted only as special concessions to the more privileged prisoners, that they might thus be spared association and contact with the general herd in the large kameras.

In one of my wanderings about the prison an officer who joined me asked me if I had ever called on either of the princes. He seemed surprised that I had not, and at once proposed that we should do so, as he was sure that they would be glad to have a chat with me.

Taking me across the yard, he knocked on a little door opening right into the quadrangle, but, getting no answer, opened it, passed through a small lobby, and knocked on another door at the farther end. This was at once opened by a rather shabbily but very neatly dressed man, who greeted him with a distinguished but subdued courtesy, which gradually melted into an unaffected cordiality that was thoroughly returned.

The major, who introduced me in a manner which was as respectful to the prisoner as it

## The Korsakoffsk Prison

would have been to a fellow-officer, explained the liberty he had taken by the pleasure he thought it would afford the prince to meet one from such a distance, and, taking out his cigarettes, he made the prince lead the way in a general and fraternal smoke.

A slight nervousness and timidity in the nobleman's manner being thus in some degree abated, we soon launched into an easy conversation, which was so unrestrained that I ventured to shift my general remarks to personal inquiries respecting himself, his present routine of living, occupation, and diversion, and the extent to which he had acquired tolerance of the daily monotony.

As this daily routine of his included but little outside the cell in which we were conversing, perhaps I had better mention that this was a room in which floors, walls, and ceiling were all of bare wood. It was about fourteen feet by ten in size, about twelve feet high, and provided with a fairly large but grated window. This admitted plenty of light, but through it nothing could be seen but the sky, unless one stood upon a chair or table, when he could gaze over a fine landscape for twenty miles. This cell contained a rough wooden cot with a neat-looking bed, a long, narrow table, two rough chairs and a stool, a fireplace, little shelves here and

## Prisoners of Russia

there, and a bench, which appeared to be used for some kind of work. The whole was scrupulously neat. In person the prince was rather tall and thin, with a very refined, dark, pale face set off by very dark hair and beard, trimmed with great neatness. I felt that not only now but at all times, he must have been a man of gentle disposition.

In answer to my personal questions, he pointed to about a dozen small, greasy, half-worn-out old books, of which two were Latin, two German, and the rest Russian. The bench, with a variety of odd materials upon it, I found he used in the manufacture of little memorandum pocket-books—one of these rude examples of his skill he was good enough to present to me, and I have it with me at this moment as a souvenir of my visit. Having ascertained from the major that he would not be offended by it, I praised his workmanship, and apologetically placed on his little bench a couple of roubles. Although anywhere else this rough specimen of workmanship would not fetch five cents, I was glad of the excuse for a compliment and a contribution to his slender finances. I was assured by my friend that the prince was more grateful for this than he cared to express.

As I shall have to refer to this gentleman again, I will only say now that our visit, which

## The Korsakoffsk Prison

lasted for about half an hour, was a very agreeable one not only to myself and my friend, but also, I think, to the prince, to whom it must have afforded at least an agreeable diversion; and, judging from his cordiality when we parted, I believe that he thoroughly appreciated it. I was much struck by the courteous and respectful manner in which the prince was treated by the major, and to observe that this was evidently not at all affected for this special occasion, but fairly illustrated the consideration and sympathy which the distinguished prisoner was in the habit of receiving from the other officials also.

So far as the bed and general appointments of the prince's quarters were concerned, it is only fair to say that, though smaller, his cell or lodging was quite as comfortable and neat as the average of the apartments of the unmarried military and civil officers in the settlement.

For special reasons, the prince was strictly confined to the prison area; he took his exercise as he pleased in the southern quadrangle, and his life was as completely separate from that of the general prisoners as was that of many of the officials.

There was another solitary cell in this quadrangle, occupied by another prisoner who was also a prince. His quarters, which were pointed out to me, were about the same as the cell I

## Prisoners of Russia

have described. His general treatment, too, I was informed, was conducted on the same lines.

The central quadrangle into which the main entrance to the prison opened had to be crossed in going to either of the others. Its eastern flank consisted of the guard-house and officers' quarters; the western of kameras, chiefly occupied by the good-conduct second-year prisoners, who were busy elsewhere during the day. At such times, therefore, these buildings were usually almost empty, and presented nothing whatever worthy of mention.

The northern quadrangle, separated from the central one by a strong stockade, was chiefly occupied by the first-year prisoners. The buildings on the northern side of it contained those who were considered the most desperate, such as in Europe would be kept in solitary cells for life. Not a single cell, nor even a special-punishment cell, was I able to find in this quadrangle.

The only distinctive feature I could discover in this northern range was not in the size of the rooms, which were as large and airy as any of the others, but in the fact that the prisoners there were strictly confined to their quarters, and that every one of them wore the maximum fourteen-pound chains all the time. The weight included the leg chains, which were attached from a waist-belt and could be raised by a string

## The Korsakoffsk Prison

in walking, and the wrist-chains, which were also attached to the same belt. These chains constituted what was considered a sufficient encumbrance to preclude escape, though they did not interfere with the necessary movements of the prisoners. Upon these there was no restraint whatsoever within the large room assigned to them, in which they associated with each other with as much freedom as if the kam-era were simply a house of detention.

From all I could see, the main idea of the authorities was to hold these convicts securely, yet at the least cost and trouble. The notion of mere punishment did not seem to enter into the calculations. It was here that were kept the men who had committed additional murders or other crimes since their arrival in Sakhalin. And this was the room from which were brought the prisoners who were at different times flogged in my presence.

On the right of this quadrangle is an oblong north-east quadrangle. In this, on the highest point within the prison walls, is situated the watch-tower, which overlooks not only all the yards or quadrangles, but the whole town and the country immediately surrounding. This north-east quadrangle is flanked by a very long line of prisoners' lodgings, the windows of which look out upon the mountain scenery beyond.

## Prisoners of Russia

Within these buildings are situated the bake-houses for the prison and settlement, and the cook-houses and kitchen premises of the prison.

Here, in these rude and extensive kitchens, I would watch the bread-making and baking, and in another part beyond the bakery see the final distribution of it to convicts and officials. As I tasted different lots and batches, I satisfied myself that as regards quality there was no discrimination in the respective issues, the same brown bread being distributed to officers and convicts alike. I did the same respecting other parts of the daily rations, and satisfied myself that the samples of soup tasted by the Governor and myself daily at his house were bona fide specimens of the soup actually given on the same day to the convicts. The fish soup, in particular, I found to be very palatable and seemingly nutritious. It was fairly thick, and contained a good proportion of vegetables, including potatoes and cabbage, and to this I partly attributed my inability to discover among the prisoners actual cases of scurvy, so prevalent in Siberian prisons.

The different kameras or rooms were all pretty much alike—long, lofty sheds with the same sloping wooden bench running down one side, and in some cases, but not in all, a rough table with equally rough benches or stools, as

## The Korsakoffsk Prison

the only furniture. During the day, each prisoner's blanket was in a roll at the head of his accustomed sleeping-place on the bench, as is so often seen in the lodgings for detained prisoners, for vagrants, and in "doss" houses in various other countries.

I think that any foreign visitor would describe this establishment, so far as the buildings are concerned, as barracks, its use as a prison appearing to have been a subsequent adaptation.

I made frequent visits to the barracks of the military garrison within gunshot of the prison, and so am familiar with every detail of the accommodation there provided for the soldiers of the imperial army. In both the barracks and the prison the air space is beyond all regulation requirements. In both, the wooden flooring and the sleeping bench arrangements are the same. There are only two points of difference: In the barracks the windows are at the usual height above the floor, and are not barred, hence the barrack-room has a more cheerful appearance, even where the windows are only in the same proportion; and there is a larger supply of tables, benches, and stools, but the style of these is the same in both cases.

There is, then, substantially but little difference between the barrack-room of the soldier

## Prisoners of Russia

and the kamera of the convict in Korsakoffsk prison.

The impression received on entering the soldiers' quarters is, however, quite another matter. As each soldier has in addition to his kit a variety of little belongings which he is allowed to arrange more or less according to his taste, the visitor immediately feels that the barrack-room is occupied by free individuals, the prison kamera by residents under restraint.

The only part of the prison which exhibits the slightest pretension to architecture is the gate-way at the main entrance. Its façade is quite high and solid-looking, with fairly well-carved panels overhead, the effect of which is mildly imposing. The gates themselves are massive wood, quite plain, and are rarely opened, a smaller door within the same porch-way being all that is used for ordinary ingress and egress.

This entrance is under a very deep flat-roofed archway within which are two or more offices. Two sentinels always stand at the front of the door, one of whom strokes down and examines every convict whenever he goes in or out, to ascertain if he has any forbidden article concealed about his person.

On the appearance of an officer at the gate, "Smirno" is yelled out, the sentinels on duty

Prisoners under guard.





## The Korsakoffsk Prison

salute, and the corporal of the guard passes him in or out. When the Governor enters the whole guard turns out, though, if the visit be a repetition during the same day, he generally orders them not to do so.

The turnkey is not an inevitable companion in moving about this prison. If it was necessary to have any particular locked door opened, the man with the key would be hunted up; but these occasions were few, as most of the doors in all directions, except in the northernmost building, would need but a push or the raising of the latch during the daytime to open them.

As most of the kameras or lodging-rooms were occupied at night by thirty or forty prisoners, it seemed to me that plots and combinations might be made in considerable force, especially as two thirds of the prisoners wore no chains at all. From the unprison-like looseness and shiftlessness prevalent throughout the establishment, I gathered that it is sufficiently understood by the prisoners that it is the island itself which is their real prison, the jail structure being regarded rather as lodgings, a successful escape from which would be but the beginning of inevitable and additional suffering beyond possible calculation.

Under these circumstances in Sakhalin, the

## Prisoners of Russia

state does not go to the expense of building imposing stone castles with gloomy corridors and cave-like cells. It does not employ troops of turnkeys and wardens with their melancholy clank of keys to watch each individual prisoner immured in his sepulchral and solitary cell, but adopts an expedient vastly cheaper for the state—the use of manacles of varying weight and strength adapted to what may be deemed expedient in each particular case. In none of the kameras did I discover the unpleasant odour I had expected. What might be found in winter, when the stoves were lighted and the doors closed, I am unable to say, but I can hardly imagine the prisoners as being satisfied unless the atmosphere were rendered unbreathable for an ordinary European.

Should this general description of the prison building at Korsakoffsk excite any feeling of disappointment because it includes too little that is horrible, the facts alone can be held responsible. It may be observed that, on the other hand, I have said nothing whatever in its praise. I am writing at the present moment just fresh from a visit to one of the best of her late British Majesty's model prisons in England, in which the floors and utensils, from the condemned cells to the kitchen, are in a state of cleanliness and polish which is scarcely sur-

## The Korsakoffsk Prison

passed in any one of the palaces in which the Queen herself resided.

To judge the prison of Korsakoffsk by such a standard, I need not say, would be simply absurd, and yet anybody who is acquainted with the character and habits of the classes from which the greater number of the Korsakoffsk convicts are derived, would not for a moment doubt that if to such a convict could be offered a change to the solitary confinement and oakum-picking within one of the cells in this silent mausoleum, he would regard the proposition with the utmost horror and most emphatically reject the offer.

It would seem to be particularly prophetic of the Asiatic, and of the low-class Russian, that man is not made "to live alone." The ordinary moujik, with his huge greasy boots and oily sheepskin overcoat, its woolly side inward, in which he works by day and sleeps and stews by night on the top of the domestic oven, right through the long winter, becomes the metropolis of the world of parasites, which, according to his notion, helps to keep him warm and comfortable. One of the punishments he most resents on being sent to Sakhalin is the strong weekly compulsory steam-bath.

In Korsakoffsk there are three bath-houses: one for the officials, one for the soldiers, and one

## Prisoners of Russia

for the convicts. They are all on the same plan, and the process is practically the same in each. When the bather enters the general bathroom, the attendant dips buckets of not actually boiling water from a tank, and continues to dash this at him as long as he thinks he can stand it. Then he flagellates the bather all over with rods made, not of birch, but of prickly pine branches, till he is as red as a lobster.

He next spreads on a part of the floor, which is the brick roof of a furnace, a thick carpet of fresh pine leaves and directs the bather to stand on it. Upon this he dashes bucket after bucket of the same hot water until the scalding steam arising from it becomes so dense and suffocating that the bather is literally completely lost in the clouds. After the exposure to the steam has been enough to kill any living creature smaller than the bather himself, he is taken aside, and thoroughly scrubbed with soap-suds and a pine branch brush. Again he is bathed, scrubbed, and steamed as before, the attendant telling him to keep gently turning. Two or three buckets of water not frozen quite solid give the *coup de grace*. They are spitefully dashed upon the victim with such force that it is impossible for him to say whether the water is very cold or very hot. This sort of a bath is a great luxury—when it is over. Such is the

## The Korsakoffsk Prison

tonic and stimulating effect of it, I was told, that after it, with the temperature outside twenty or thirty degrees below zero, bathers will sometimes run home through snow-drifts with most of their clothing under their arms, and feel all the better for it.

For mutual convenience, every official has his particular hour once a week, when he has undisturbed possession. Though this process is a very thorough one, it is none too much so perhaps; for, like confession and absolution, it has to cover a multitude of sins.

The therapeutical effect of these baths depends on the individual. To those who need them and are strong enough to bear them, they may be very useful.

I know of one case in which a man in New York took a Russian bath as it is practised there, who, having a weak heart, was killed by it on the spot. I also know of three other persons in whose case such a bath was followed by permanent disability. In spite of this knowledge, however, like an idiot, I took my turn and went through the whole process, exactly as did the Governor. I cannot say that I felt very much the worse for it in any particular, but, while I told my host that I had enjoyed it "very much, thank you," I never went again.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE FOOD OF THE EXILES

THE average daily ration consisted of three pounds of bread and a quarter of a pound of meat, or a pound of fish, with about a pint of soup.

The men who were at hard labour received an additional pound of bread. On the fast days, over a hundred of which were religiously observed by the prison regulations, no meat was supplied. In this case fish was substituted for it.

The soup had for its basis sometimes meat, sometimes fish, and always contained vegetables. These were either potatoes or cabbage, and sometimes both.

Each prisoner could have his ration separately, if he wished it, but, generally speaking, all the inmates of a single kamera or room would be divided into squads, each squad having its Starosta or chief, of its own selection, who received all the rations due to his mess. By this arrangement, each person could get perhaps more of that part of the ration which he hap-

## The Food of the Exiles

pened to like best; better dishes could be made by the Starosta with the materials, and certain parts which were in excess, especially bread, could be exchanged for something more to their general liking. The quantity of bread given to prisoners is greater than that supplied in English prisons, and is the same as that given to the Russian soldiery.

The bread is made of rye, the same as is used all through Germany as well as Russia. This black bread, as it is called, is supposed to have more staying power than wheaten white bread, and, though repulsive in some eyes, is preferred by those accustomed to it, not only among the peasantry, but among many persons of all classes throughout the greater part of the continent. On my visits to the prison bakery, I have seen this bread made, baked, and delivered, and in its distribution observed that the convict Starostas and the families of the officials were served from the same batch without discrimination. This bread is used by the official families themselves more largely than white bread, though the latter is usually on their tables. The Governor always preferred the black bread, and used to laugh at my folly in not sharing his taste.

I observed that the various gangs of convicts working within, say, a mile or so of the prison

## Prisoners of Russia

were allowed to come to the building for dinner, so as to get their soup, meat, or fish, as the case might be, in addition to the bread, which otherwise would have been their only portion.

Convicts continuing within the prison after their two years of good-conduct service, who had money, whether sent to them, or earned by them in one of the prison workshops, were allowed to supplement their prison rations with whatever other articles they could purchase from the commissariat.

A very considerable number of those employed in the various workshops within the prison, but who lived in their own cottages, had in addition the products of their own gardens.

To facilitate a variety in their menu, there was a shop in the town which was open twice a week. It corresponded to a sutler's in the army, and offered as great a variety of goods as the store of an American western village. It also supplied about the same indescribable combination of odours, in which kerosene, cheese, onions, pepper, and peppermint lozenges were among the articles which more conspicuously announced themselves. In gloomy weather, and when feeling as if I were an exile myself, I used to drop in at the store for a change. Besides the composite odour and its western asso-

## The Food of the Exiles

ciations, there were the familiar placards and advertisements of Waterbury clocks, Pears' soap, and Palmer's biscuits. These advertisement cards were used as pictorial works of art with which to astonish the wondering eyes of the poor exiles, who were utterly incapable of comprehending them, but to me they suggested thoughts of home and friends and country, which by so many possibilities I might perhaps never see again.

I inquired if through rich friends at home, or exceptional earnings and savings in Sakhalin, some of the free convicts used the store facilities so as to live in a luxurious and extravagant manner. My informant told me that, though there were some exiles in each of the categories whose friends were rich and willing to be generous, the regulations are so distinct and comprehensive that the maximum amount which can come into the hands of an exile is small, and so definitely limited, that there is very little possibility of such occurrences. Whatever the amount of money friends may send for a prisoner, the whole of it is placed to his account with the Administration. While in prison he is not allowed to draw more than two roubles a month; afterward he may receive more, according to the category to which by good conduct he is promoted. The same is the case with his

## Prisoners of Russia

earnings, and in all instances must he report in detail the items for which the money is expended. In this way, recklessness in expenditure is not a temptation. Moreover, as might be expected, I found the prices of various articles so high as to be almost beyond the range of that class of customers, except in very small quantities.

The Government allowance for prisoners and for prison subsistence is made upon a basis of so much per head. It may be ten, fifteen, or twenty kopeks. This varies necessarily according to time and place. At the time I was in Korsakoffsk it was fifteen kopeks. Forced colonists, or peasant colonists, had the option of taking this wholly in money, or partly in money and partly in provisions, or of taking the full ration in kind. In the agricultural villages as in the prison, the peasant convicts club together, and, as there are many things they grow themselves, they arrange to draw only one or two articles in kind, and the rest in money.

It was my impression that, as regards quantity, the rations of food were ample, especially of bread, but that as regards variety there was something to be desired. Yet, the scurvy, which is so frequently found in consequence of this defect in many parts of Siberia, I looked for in vain in Sakhalin as a distinct disease,

## The Food of the Exiles

though a scorbutic condition was frequently manifest.

The alleviation of the lot of prisoners by outside contributions, such as occurs to a considerable extent in the larger towns of Siberia by the united efforts of philanthropic committees, cannot take place in Sakhalin. The freedom with which prisoners are allowed to receive supplies of food, not only occasionally, but daily from friends outside, in the larger towns in Siberia proper, had surprised me; but in Korsakoffsk the only voluntary aid of which I am aware was that given to children through Madame S—, of which I have spoken. In addition to the school she maintained for them, she helped them in various other ways, as far as the funds she obtained would allow.

The need of this will be apparent when it is remembered that the Government allowance for children is only at the rate of about six kopeks a day, while for their education and training the state makes no provision whatever.

As to the manner of eating in the prison, the prisoners are not supplied with knives or forks, the only utensils allowed them being wooden bowls and wooden spoons. While having his private bowl, it is customary for each prisoner to dip his bread into the big common

## Prisoners of Russia

bowl of the mess around which all its members sit, after the manner of the peasantry.

The free convicts and peasant convicts live as well as the peasant class in any part of Russia, and with more uniformity than they do the year round. They are always protected against the possibility of famines by the regularity of the Government supplies of fixed rations, which are distributed once a week. On my visit to their cottages I found that most of the families had stores in reserve, not only of such kinds as the Government supplies, but of vegetables, and especially of potatoes, cucumbers, onions, and such other things as they grow in their own gardens.

The length of the winter makes provident habits in these particulars very important for their comfort. As there are no taverns, the convicts are wholly prohibited from indulgence in drink. Nowhere else, either in the United States or in any other part of the world, perhaps, is the principle of prohibition in such practical and effective operation as among the exiles on the island of Sakhalin.

The temptations to drink are rigidly confined to the officials, the only class on the island who are without restrictions in this particular.

In most of the villages there seemed to be a fair supply of milk, butter, cheese, and eggs; but,

## The Food of the Exiles

for natural reasons, their distribution seemed to be as unequal as it would be in a free country.

Tobacco is not prohibited even in the prison, but I have never seen a prisoner smoke in the presence of an official, unless under very exceptional circumstances, the liberty being taken only by women. Though tobacco is supplied as part of the ration, smoking is allowed on certain days only. This is true also respecting kvass, or small beer.

Almost any evening, however, in passing the prison windows opening on the streets or fields, the tobacco smoke, as well as the unsubdued tones of the prisoners, would be strong enough to compel my attention.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE OCCUPATIONS OF EXILES

IN my description of the Korsakoffsk prison I have but incidentally referred to the trades carried on within it. In the assignment to different occupations there is a system of legal limitations, which gives a certain degree of protection against the personal caprice of officials, though in the application of all rates these despots are allowed great latitude.

According to this system, all prisoners who are nobles, and all prisoners who are classed as merely political offenders, are exempt from hard labour in the ordinary course.

During the first year after their arrival, certain of the hard-labour convicts are kept all the time strictly within the prison boundaries. During the second year, if their conduct has furnished no cause for objection, they are sent to work outside the prison, but only to do what is considered the worst of the hard labour in Korsakoffsk.

Good behaviour during two years of resi-

## The Occupations of Exiles

dence in the jail makes prisoners eligible for residence outside its walls, the bestowal of the privilege being left entirely to the judgment of the officials, who, in granting it, discriminate in favour of those married prisoners whose wives at home have applied for permission to join them.

Such convicts, if they are skilful in any one of the trades conducted within the prison, may continue to work in their accustomed shop there, though living in a neighbouring cottage. They must, however, be found at home at certain hours in the evening, and strictly adhere to specified regulations in every particular.

If their work justifies it, premiums are awarded them, part of which may be paid them monthly, the other part being placed to their credit on official books, for use when, in the judgment of the officials, it may be employed to the best advantage of the convict and the colony.

According to the system of promotion, the convict may subsequently have allotted to him a house and land in one of the agricultural villages. At such a time he may receive not only the money which has accumulated to his credit, but be furnished also with such cattle, implements, or additional money advances as may be deemed necessary or expedient for the cultiva-

## Prisoners of Russia

tion and improvement of his farm. Besides such seeds as he may require at the start, for such a period as they may be required, the necessaries of life, such as food and clothing, are assured to him as regularly as if he were in the prison, with such special privileges in the matter of commutations of parts of the regulation allowances as the varying and improved conditions of his life may render expedient.

It may appear from what I have said that, as the local Administration is the exile's banker not only while he is a prisoner, but for some time after he is a free convict, his condition must have many limitations, however great his success, and that the knowledge of this fact must be unfavourable to the ambition of the agricultural villager.

At Korsakoffsk there is a weekly market-day, and from what I saw on these occasions more than from what was told me on this point, I judge that a good many of these agriculturists had released themselves entirely from this form of bondage, and were practically as free in their pursuits within the locality assigned to them as free peasants could be in any part of Russia.

Every week there would be drawn up in the market-place, on either side of the street, as many as thirty or forty double teams, and quite a brisk trade seemed to be kept up between

## The Occupations of Exiles

their owners, much as would occur in an open market-place anywhere. Horses and cattle were being bought and sold by the men, and all sorts of garden and dairy produce by the women. Some of these people had the reputation of being what there is called rich. In all their business transactions there was certainly nothing to indicate any difference between these people and traders thousands of miles from a penal colony.

Among the free convicts in Sakhalin, as among groups of people everywhere who start on even terms, the line of progress soon becomes broken; some lag behind and others go ahead, some seem made to be poor and others to be rich. Some of these people whose houses I visited seemed to be barely subsisting. Others had several horses and a good stock of cattle, and seemed thoroughly well off in every particular.

In my visits to the cottagers in Korsakoffsk, I found that some of them who worked in the prison took in private work also at their own homes. With this and their gardens their spare hours were well occupied.

Partly for my own convenience, and partly for the opportunity of getting better acquainted with this class, and giving some of them a slight pecuniary lift, I hunted up a tailor, a shoemaker,

## Prisoners of Russia

and a laundress, to each of whom I gave some little employment.

I had an idea that they would jump at the chance of earning a little silver money, that they would immediately set about the work I gave them and be grateful for the opportunity. Truth to say, I was never more disappointed. I wanted a pair of shoes heeled, and asked the shoemaker to let me have them on the following evening. After careful reflection he found that, beginning with to-morrow, there would be two Saints' days in succession, and he couldn't think of commencing a new job on a Saint's day. After I had waited till the fourth day, the shoes were delivered. The Governor happened to be in the vestibule, and, on taking a look at them, he found that they were done so badly that without my knowledge he made the man's wife take them back to be done over again. In the end I got them on the fifth day, still so badly done as to be only just wearable.

I had intended to give this man about double what I would have paid in New York, but thought that I would pay him the compliment of asking the price. He promptly spared me my generosity by asking an amount which was just half as much, and suggested that I might add to that trifle as much as I liked. I was glad of the prolonged opportunity of increasing my

## The Occupations of Exiles

acquaintance with him, and gave him four times as much as would have been charged either in London or in Paris. To my disappointment, however, he did not betray the slightest sign of either the gratitude or the pleasure which I had fondly anticipated.

My laundress was of a very different type. A bright, cheerful, amiable creature of about forty, and full of good-humour, she seemed very much delighted and flattered by my visits. Hers was a story-and-a-half house of four rooms. The front room was flanked by little well-kept beds of flowers. There were pretty boxes of flowers also in each window, and the whole aspect of the cottage was so attractive on the outside as to make one wish to see the inside of it. Nor was I disappointed on entering it. Indeed, I really think that in all Russia I have never seen another cottage of its size so neat and clean.

Then there was a touch of humanity in this cottage not often seen in the houses about Korsakoffsk. Suspended by a cord from the free end of an elastic pole was a little wooden box, which was gently touched as I entered, and set in an up-and-down motion. This was done to keep the baby within it from being awakened by our conversation.

The view from the windows was as beautiful

## Prisoners of Russia

as could be found from any site in the settlement, for the cottage was built near the prison, just on the ridge of the hill crowning the settlement, and so commanded a clear view of the adjoining valley, and across the beautiful Aniva Bay.

This woman, whose husband worked in the prison, appeared to be really very much pleased that I had some work for her, and promised to do it without delay. I supposed this meant that my things would be returned to me the following evening. Nothing of the sort. It was not till six days afterward that she was able to finish them, though the weather was good and I was her only customer.

As the laundress did not bring them herself, but sent them by a little daughter, I asked Madame S—— what was the greatest amount of money I might send her. "Oh, I really don't know," she replied. "These people are so hard to deal with. It is difficult, as you have seen, to get them to do anything at all. Of time they have no idea. A price they will never fix, as they think that they will thus be sure of getting more than they could venture to ask. There is one thing, however, you may be sure of. However much you give them, they will not be satisfied. You certainly should not give more than three roubles." So I gave four, which,

## The Occupations of Exiles

being in silver coin, was equal to five roubles in paper. For the same work, much better done, I should not have been charged more than a quarter of that sum in any part of Europe. Neither by word nor sign did the woman show any satisfaction whatever at my generosity. I have given the exact words of my hostess, not only because they were in accord with my own subsequent experience, but because she was one of the most kind and generous persons living, and always had a tender sympathy with the unfortunates by whom she was surrounded. I must confess that this experience revealed to me an obverse side of the life here regarding the character of exiles and the difficulties of the officials in dealing with them, which both surprised and disappointed me. Indeed, had such facts not come to my personal knowledge, but been simply told me by an official, I should have credited the statements to official prejudice.

I am aware that it may be said that this kind of apathy in convicts with which the officials have to deal in their efforts to improve the material condition of these people, and through them to develop the resources of the country, is but a natural result of the dead-weight imposed upon them by the severity of the regulations.

## Prisoners of Russia

Every exile is aware that the officials dare not let him starve, that under all circumstances they are responsible for his maintenance; hence I fear that it is rather the rule than the exception for the convict in Sakhalin, even when free, to do only as much work as is necessary to secure to him the continuance of the privileges he already possesses. This is not a distinctly Russian trait. It is common to human nature the world over in certain stages of civilization. It seems to be cattle-nature to keep one eye on the master, the other on the crib.

A certain number of exiles, manifestly of the better class, seemed to have no fixed occupation of any sort, but were allowed to pass their time in their own way.

Small fishing companies or squads are stationed at different points along the coast, each of them usually including from six to ten free convicts, carefully selected, I should judge, accompanied by one or two soldiers as guards. They are distributed at the more favourable points, where they trawl chiefly for salmon trout, which are salted down in sand-pits as soon as caught, and collected at intervals in barges, which are towed along the coast and brought to Korsakoffsk.

It was fortunate for me that, after his long absence from the island, the Governor felt it

## The Occupations of Exiles

necessary that his tour of inspection should include all the southern part of Sakhalin, and that he chose to make me his inseparable companion on all these as well as on other occasions.

In this way I visited the fine parks, Tichujenjevsk, Najbutschi, Baranofsk, and Manni Muravjesk, with the twenty-eight agricultural villages, containing in all about seven hundred houses.

On these trips we carried with us nearly everything we were likely to need for eating, drinking, and sleeping, and at most of the villages encamped in the post-house. The only place in which we received what might be called entertainment, was at one of the larger villages, where resided a deputy chief of police. Even here, however, the best lodging they could give us was a hayloft over the stable.

After the Governor had received the reports at the respective places, anybody was at liberty to come to consult him on any matter whatever, and thus I had a remarkably good opportunity of seeing the colonists of every grade and variety.

As the Governor's visits, besides being inspectorial, were also more or less of a judicial nature, I was surprised at the very few grievances or disputes which were brought before him. Such of these as were submitted he dealt

## Prisoners of Russia

with rapidly and, it seemed to me, rather abruptly. In cases in which a visit to a particular locality was necessary for a proper decision, however, he did not hesitate to make it, reserving his verdict till afterward.

Generally speaking, the cottages were roomy and well arranged, and, as all of them were comparatively new and some scarcely finished, each settlement bore the appearance of being what it was—a model village of model houses according to plans most carefully prepared by the chief of the Agricultural Department.

These villages were decidedly superior to many of the new settlements seen on the western prairies of America, and to almost any of the villages in other parts of the Russian Empire.

Here, as everywhere in similar latitudes, there is but little to envy in the life of the settler, except to such as like it. It seemed to me that the worst feature inseparable from the life of these people was not the hardness of the work, but the forced idleness to which they are doomed during the many months of winter.

More interesting to me, and much more romantic, were our inspection visits to the various little fishing stations along the south and east coast of the island, already referred to in this chapter. These were made in the Governor's

## The Occupations of Exiles

steam launch, which was always well provisioned.

Our first trip was rather a long one, for, though we started about nine o'clock in the morning, it was nearly four when, arriving at a very pretty little cove, we ran the launch about two hundred yards up a small stream and alighted at our destination. This spot was a veritable jungle of wild flowers—an almost impenetrable cane-brake.

Near the bank of the stream was a low hut of pine branches. To the west there was not another human dwelling between it and Korsakoffsk. To the east and north, not one for over two hundred miles. That lonely hut was occupied by six murderers and one soldier, who with his loaded rifle was in sole charge of them. The hut was divided by a mud wall into a lesser and greater compartment. I found that the lesser, into which our traps were taken, was for the Governor and myself; the other and larger one for the convicts and the soldier.

The Governor ordered them to catch us some fish, and in lively fashion their little boats, which had been hauled up for the evening, were shoved off. The net was cast about thirty yards away, and, though it was drawn to shore again immediately, it took three barrels to contain the haul of salmon-trout that was made. To

## Prisoners of Russia

say that the water was solid with fish would be untrue; but it swarmed with such shoals of them, that the order to get some was given and obeyed with as much confidence as if it had related to some chicken in a coop, instead of to fishes in the sea.

By the time the fish were landed, one of the men had built up a fire on the beach, and in very short order half a dozen skewered fish were grilling for our dinner. Large, flat sea-shells did duty as plates, and, with the liquid adjuncts we had brought with us, our *al fresco* repast was as enjoyable as it was primitive.

In the hut the Governor and I bunked together in the best of all beds—a magnificent heap of fragrant pine leaves. Before going to sleep, the Governor showed so very much care about the handy position of his revolver and sabre, that I had a strong suspicion that he was glad of my company, and that alone he would hardly have ventured on such a visit. With two murderers I think I should have felt easy—especially as we had the arms and they had none; but when six such fellows were restlessly whispering to each other in another corner of the same hut during half the night, as in this case they did, I think I may as well confess that my slumbers were very fitful. The Governor fared but little better. Of this I am quite sure.

## The Occupations of Exiles

I lost no time after daybreak in exploring the surroundings. This inlet was the most warm and luxuriant little nook I had found on the island. The dense thicket of grapes, flowers, and bamboo was six or seven feet high. At a little distance along the bank of the stream, I met with one of the most beautiful surprises the island had afforded me. Perched on a twig overhanging the stream, and only a few yards beyond me, sat an exquisitely bright kingfisher, its gorgeous plumage gleaming and scintillating in the morning sun.

Whether I ought to have been so much astonished as I was, at seeing this phenomenon in such a latitude, I must leave to the naturalists to whom the ways of this bird are more familiar.

The duty of the fishing stations is to supply salted fish, first of all in quantity sufficient for a pack of about three or four hundred dogs, which live upon it principally during the summer, and exclusively during the long winter. As the dog sleighs are the only postal vehicles practicable during these long months, the dogs are of great importance on the island, and the bulk of food required for them in a single year is enormous.

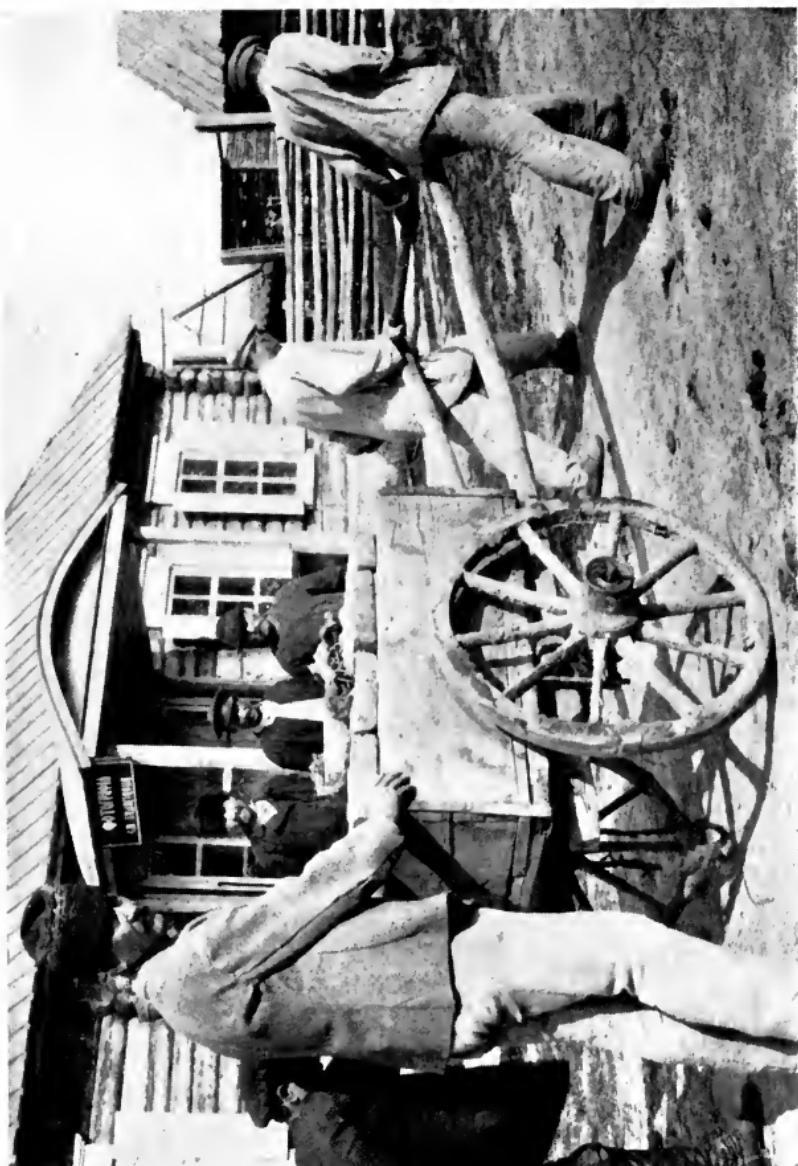
Then fish, especially fish soup, is a part of the standard prison diet, as we have seen.

To the persons who are accustomed to as-

## Prisoners of Russia

sume that under the Siberian, and especially the Sakhalin *régime*, the treatment of exiles and convicts is invariably of the most rigidly severe, if not of the most cruel character, it may come almost as a disappointment, and certainly as a surprise, to hear of such fishing stations as that I have just described. When it is remembered that this station, like the others, is situated just where trading and whaling vessels to and from Kamchatka pass in full sight; that these robust convict fishermen had two good boats, and that there was but one soldier there between six murderers and escape; that for weeks and weeks together they led this picnic life, free to scheme and plot, their position suggests either inexcusable laxity and mismanagement, or the existence of a mutual confidence between the convicts and the officials which was highly creditable to both.

Our inspections were very various, and took us in every possible direction. The hospital inspection occurred regularly every Sunday morning. One day we would visit the dog kennels, another day a brickyard, where are made the bricks for chimneys and heating-flues. Unexpectedly we would drop in at various private houses of convicts and leave suggestions for their improvement, take a look at harvesting operations, or visit the saw-mills, which are built



Transporting bricks.



## The Occupations of Exiles

on running streams, whose power is utilized for roughly cutting up forest timber.

The fishing inspections were the least fatiguing, and more than once the Governor would make these an opportunity for a pleasant outing to some of his neighbours.

From many instances which came under my personal observation, I am compelled to admit that the tendency of the officials appeared to me to act very considerately and sympathetically towards the unfortunates under their charge. It frequently happened in the course of my walks or drives with an official that we would come across one of these persons strolling abroad, most frequently on the sea-shore, and if I was supposed not to have observed this man before, my companion would give me some account of his history, in which, without one exception, so far as I can remember, his crime would be mentioned rather as a misfortune, while any special merit or skill which he possessed, and for which he had perhaps been distinguished, would be mentioned not only in a generous spirit, but almost with the same sort of local pride as is manifested in a provincial American town when a passer-by is pointed out as "one of our leading citizens." It may be said, however, that when one of these persons is systematically insubordinate and troublesome, his conduct is resented

## Prisoners of Russia

with a firm hand, all the more so because of what the official must feel to be the undeserved personal ingratitude and indignity displayed towards himself.

From what I saw, I am convinced that it is far too common for an exile smarting under what he feels to be an unjust sentence, to visit his resentment upon his overseer, who has nothing whatever to do with it, and so to force the overseer in his own defence into a course of conduct which, from the standpoint of the political, might be designated as cruelty.

## CHAPTER X

### WOMEN EXILES, MARRIAGE PROBLEMS, AND COLONIZATION

As there is but one woman to about every eight men in Sakhalin, and as the female element is such an essential feature in the successful establishment of the agricultural villages to which the Administration chiefly looks for the development and prosperity of the country, women are treated with a degree of consideration which otherwise might be considered greater than the mere factor of sex could render just or expedient.

I have referred to the occupations in the prison workshops. The work given the hard-labour convicts in the shops for females is simply that of seamstresses, and it is a very unusual thing indeed for any one of them to remain there for the full probationary term. The Administration, having in view the Imperial Government's plans for the settlement of the country, is much more anxious to place them out of prison than to keep them in it.

## Prisoners of Russia

It is from the prison probationers alone that domestic servants can be obtained. Either directly from the prison or from domestic service, they may form an alliance akin to concubinage, though, if the ceremony can be legally performed, marriage is encouraged. It is said that priests in Sakhalin will not perform the marriage ceremony until they are satisfied that the conditions are strictly in accordance with ecclesiastical and civil law in the case of each applicant; therefore legal marriages in Sakhalin are somewhat restricted. As regards concubinage, I got the impression that the Administration interferes as little as possible with any private arrangement, or change of arrangement, which any two or four persons of the two sexes may mutually and amicably make. What I have since learned proves that this impression was not wholly mistaken, for of three hundred and eight births in 1890, forty per cent had to be recorded as illegitimate.

Whether from policy or from gallantry I will not pretend to say, but it is certainly true that nothing insures for a female convict so much and such certain consideration and immunity as the accident of her sex. On the march to Siberia a woman can always claim a place in a telega if she prefers riding to walking. Though she be condemned for murder to hard labour for

## Women Exiles

life in Sakhalin, the severest punishment imposed upon her even during the period of prison probation is that of a seamstress in the female department of the prison workshop; and, as it is from these women alone that the families on the island can obtain the necessary domestics, it rests chiefly with themselves, in the matter of good conduct, how quickly they quit prison, for the employment department has more applications for domestics than it is able to meet.

Still greater, however, is the demand for these persons in the numerous agricultural villages. This brings me to an aspect of penal life in Sakhalin which is very delicate and complicated, and one that I can hardly pretend to describe with sufficient accuracy to be thoroughly just to all concerned. Suffice it to say that female convicts who do not become engaged in domestic service are, sooner or later, in one way or another, either joined by husbands who become voluntary exiles for the purpose; form marriage alliances with male convicts; or, where this is for some reason or other legally impossible, settle down, I believe, in some sort of concubinage with free convicts. Of well-conducted female convicts it may be truthfully said that their special career is largely of their own choosing, and that, while the condition of most of

## Prisoners of Russia

them is at least as comfortable in Sakhalin as it was before they were sent there, with a large number it is more comfortable and promising than any condition they had previously known, or had ever thought to attain.

The marriage question in Sakhalin is hard to be understood. No better evidence of this can be offered than the crude remarks to be found in almost any book in the English language on the Siberian exile question, even by writers who have themselves been in Siberia. The only inference to be drawn from the statements made in these books is that committal to Siberia means a complete revocation of all marital claims and obligations, so that both husband and wife, wherever they may be, are as if they had never been married; that, in other words, in this as in all other respects the prisoner sentenced to exile is, in the eye of the law, as one upon whom has been passed and executed the sentence of death.

As a broad principle, this is practically true, but the inference and impressions which such statements, made without proper qualification, give rise to, are in some important particulars incorrect.

It is not at all strange that these false impressions should be so general outside Russia, seeing that among the Russians themselves there

## Women Exiles

are very few, indeed, even of those immediately concerned, to whom the laws on this question in their technical application are ever known.

In the eye of the law, and in the practice of the Greek or National Church, the mere fact of exile does not absolve the criminal from his matrimonial bond. The husband or wife, who in consequence of a sentence of exile is left behind, may, however, by legal process especially provided, apply on this account for its dissolution. In such a case the reason is deemed valid, and a decree of dissolution may, in the discretion of the court, be granted. It is unnecessary to remark that in such proceedings the exile has no voice, and is regarded as "*non est*"—that is, as being really dead. But it is of very rare occurrence that the married person left behind becomes aware of this legal technicality.

If the exile himself discovers it, his knowledge is probably first gained from the priest, whose aid he invokes to unite him in marriage to another exile. He then finds his position a very perplexing one, for I know that in Sakhalin the priest will not perform the ceremony in such a case without documentary evidence that the person left behind has taken advantage of the provision of the law, and obtained a legal dissolution or divorce.

## Prisoners of Russia

Supposing the exile to be a husband, it is a very delicate matter for him to explain the situation to his distant wife, and to induce her to go through the legal process he may indicate, and to forward to him the documentary evidence which may enable him to marry the exiled woman who is her rival. Indeed, if he wrote his wife a letter to that effect, he would not be at all sure that the Governor would allow it to be forwarded.

If, on the other hand, he should write his wife a glowing account of his present situation and prospects as a free convict, and urge her to take advantage of the government provision by which she and all their family may join him in his new home at government expense, his communication would be sure to reach her, for the Administration wants all the free colonists in Sakhalin who can be induced to come.

In 1890 there were said to be in the island as many as thirty-three hundred and one voluntary exiles brought there at government expense, all of whom had chosen to become settlers themselves, in order to join a condemned relative.

Far be it from me to ascribe any part of this heroic immigration to the general ignorance of the laws of which I have spoken, but I know that some of the officials think that, in the very

## Women Exiles

dubious condition of those left behind, this ignorance makes it easier for them to cast in their lot promptly with the exiled one.

It might be imagined that only women and wives would have the affection, devotion, and heroism necessary for such splendid sacrifice on behalf of another. And I must confess that I was myself greatly astonished to find that, of the total number of persons who thus came voluntarily to Sakhalin in 1890, as many as seven hundred and seventy were men who came to join exiled wives; while only thirty-eight were women, who came to share the lot of exiled husbands.

This fact was a great shock to my previous notions of the relative devotion of the two sexes in Russia; but it is only fair to say, on behalf of the women, that in the case of the men there are various items which might be regarded as possible offsets to their greater apparent gallantry and devotion.

All such male immigrants have a distinct position, and form the class defined as agricultural peasants. They are exempt from the ordinary police surveillance; each of them obtains a special grant of land, and is supplied with agricultural implements; he is aided also as regards clothing, government rations, or a money allowance at a fixed rate per head for his family.

## Prisoners of Russia

The system under which he comes is really a sort of "State-aided emigration." Presumably these immigrants better themselves in every practical way by coming to Sakhalin, so long as they are superior to the mere sentiment pertaining to compulsory residence where the change may be wholly to their advantage.

But what about the vastly larger proportion of free convicts who, though married, are not thus joined by faithful conjugal partners? What about the many of both sexes whom, for legal reasons existing on the one side or on the other, the priest cannot consent to join together in matrimony called "holy"?

The Administration will not assign a house and land to a free convict woman if she is alone. A man is not of much use occupying a house and land if he is single and alone. The Administration knows and appreciates the facts, and in them lies one of the most delicate and perplexing of the many problems connected with the agricultural colonization of the island, the kind of colonization regarded by the Administration as perhaps its supreme reliance for the permanent development of the colony.

In this perplexing condition of things, it may be asked, What does the Administration do? So far as I could ascertain, it does under these very exceptional conditions neither more

## Women Exiles

nor less than some European and American states do under conditions much more favourable.

It endeavours to prevent men and women from breaking the local laws, but I think that it does not consider it within its power or province to compel men and women to be moral, according to the interpretation of the church. Among these preponderating numbers of men and women legally unmarriageable, alliances are inevitably formed. So far as my personal observation among them went, I got the impression that prostitution, however, is a rare exception. Indeed, with the rigid police surveillance which exists even in the agricultural villages as regards hours, etc., irregularities of living are almost impossible. The only courses open to these people with immunity are celibacy or concubinage, and the latter appeared to me to be not uncommon. This was only my impression, however, and may be incorrect. These alliances are maintained in a manner which is outwardly, at least, just as orderly and well regulated as where the couples are lawfully married. I need not remark that concubinage is notoriously less prolific than legal marriage, for reasons which it is not necessary to enumerate. Yet, it is from these alliances that about forty per cent of the total number of births on the island

## Prisoners of Russia

come, while the number of persons living in concubinage is at least equal to the number of those living in lawful marriage.

This condition of affairs struck me as one of the most startling facts which I encountered in Sakhalin. There must be many who naturally share my impression, and of these I would simply ask, What would be your remedy? Not under other conditions, but under those I have described as actually existing in Sakhalin?

I think it is a common impression that Russian women, especially of the lower orders, do not expect to be treated with much affection even by men who are their own lawful husbands, and that marriage itself is generally determined chiefly by mutual convenience. The correctness of this impression I am not at all inclined to dispute. I was daily entering the houses of married couples and of couples living in concubinage, but, except in a few instances, I never could pretend to detect any sign of difference between them as to domestic manners or general demeanour.

From what I saw and from what I was told, however, I judged that the unmarried couples frequently took advantage of the looseness of their bonds, and that the envies and jealousies so apt to be incident to such conditions occasionally led to some little shuffling and fresh

## Women Exiles

dealing of the social pack. The discarding part is sometimes done in a manner almost tragic. On one occasion I was spending a few days on a visit to the chief of police of one of the larger districts in the interior of Sakhalin. His house was in the centre of one of the more prosperous of the agricultural villages, the houses of the free convicts stretching right and left of him, on either side of the road, in one long, broad street.

After our two o'clock dinner, I took a stroll alone about the village, dropping in here and there at different cottages, and thinking to break the monotony of the poor people's lives by an unexpected courteous and friendly visit.

One of these houses interested me more than any of the others had done as soon as I entered, on account of the more orderly arrangement of the furniture. Though built on the same plan, it appeared to be larger than the others. The outbuildings seemed better stocked with cattle, the yard more tidy, and signs of prosperity abounded in every part of the establishment to an unusual degree. Still more, the mistress of the house, who was the only person at home, was distinctly attractive. She looked to be about thirty-five, and exceptionally robust, with a bright colour in her cheeks and a still brighter light in her eyes. She exhibited what one rarely sees in these exile

## Prisoners of Russia

women—a half-concealed inclination to be coquettish. Moreover, she seemed to feel honoured by the unexpected event of a visit from a foreign gentleman whom she knew to be a guest of the chief of police. She certainly did her best to make my call agreeable.

With manifest pride in the bread and butter of her own making, she quickly laid a little cloth and placed them before me, with a pitcher of fresh milk from her little dairy. In return I emptied my case of cigarettes, as I knew that she would appreciate these more than anything else I was able to offer. In the evening, on recounting some of the incidents of my afternoon visits, I particularly emphasized to the chief the comparative superiority of this woman and her housekeeping, regarding which he seemed to agree with me.

The day after my return to Korsakoffsk a telegram was received, from which it appeared that, at the very time I was being thus entertained by this woman, her paramour, with whom she had lived for years in concubinage, was being distributed in different parts of the forest beyond her back garden.

Had I looked closely enough at the time of my calling on her, I might perhaps have perceived that the black dirt under one or more of her finger-nails was streaked with red, that on

## Women Exiles

the log walls of the room there were some dingy remains of doubtful-looking splashes which a good deal of water had not quite removed; that the floor, which had at first struck me as so exceptionally clean, had large patches of a rust-coloured stain, and that the joints of its rough planking were exceedingly wet.

From the facts that came to my knowledge in Korsakoffsk, I learned that on the evening preceding my call upon her, this woman Lobanoff had prepared for her paramour, with whom she had so long been living, an unusually good and savoury supper, of which he had eaten freely on his return from the forest, where he had been working. His enjoyment of it had been all the greater because he had found that his favourite knife had been so beautifully sharpened that, as he remarked, "it cut like a razor." These facts were elicited from the evening police patrol, who on their rounds conversed with him and afterward saw him sleeping in his chair. It appears that immediately after they had passed, this pleasing woman swept the newly sharpened knife across his throat with such vigour that he never awoke or knew what had happened to him. She then carefully hacked the corpse into very small pieces, placed them in a sack, and at dead of night carried them through her back garden to the adjacent forest, distrib-

## Prisoners of Russia

utting the pieces in such a way that the hungry wolves which infested that region would be sure to carry them off before daybreak, beyond possible discovery.

These facts this charming assassin afterward acknowledged with cool indifference to my friend the chief of police. At the time of my call upon her nobody had inquired after the murdered man. As he had been engaged in chopping wood all alone in the same part of the forest to which his quivering fragments had since been carried, and had gone and returned by the same back-garden path, there had been no reason why his neighbours should either have seen him or missed him.

A few hours after my call upon the Lobanoff woman, and at about the time when I was talking to my host in her praise, she heard that tap on the shutter which marks the nightly visit of the police patrol, and to which she responded without delay.

Instead of revealing the terror she must have felt, this woman gaily upbraided the patrol for making so much noise when her man, as they could see, was not only in bed, but fast asleep. This wonderful self-control and cleverness, backed by the dummy in the bed, which under the circumstances they did not venture to disturb, caused the patrol to make their accus-

## Women Exiles

tomed mark opposite the name of Lobanoff and her paramour, showing that at the time they called at the house both were present. For two days more in succession did Lobanoff practise her cajolery and delusion upon the credulous watch.

When confronted with proofs, instead of relenting, she suddenly assumed an injured and defiant air, and, as if proud of her superior cleverness, boastingly made the confession of which I have given the substance. She said that she had murdered the man because she had grown tired of him, and that, as she had another one whom she liked better and who was ready to take his place, the police need not trouble themselves. Everything could go on as before, only much better.

What sort of justice was meted out to this woman Lobanoff I will discuss later on. Suffice it to say, for the moment, that for being such easy victims of this woman's wiles, both the policemen on the night patrol received a punishment which was altogether greater than that meted out to this practised, cold-blooded murderer. This last crime was her third murder—but she was a woman, and a pleasing one, especially to the officials and to the persons whom she made her victims.

When all these incidents in her confession

## Prisoners of Russia

were told me in Korsakoffsk, and I thought of the personal relation in which I had stood to them, I was positively chilled by the reminiscence; nor can I even now avoid shivering as I recall the shocking incidents.

"Have you seen '*la Belle Femme*' yet?" officers were daily asking me during my first week or two in Korsakoffsk. As we were sailing out in the bay, one of them pointed to a distant house beyond the first hill from the shore, and exclaimed: "There! there you see the house of our '*belle femme!*'" "Run to the window, quick!" said a certain lady to me one morning as I was at breakfast, "do you see her? There she goes! that is the noted Beauty of Korsakoffsk! She is said to be the most beautiful woman in all the island of Sakhalin."

An officer from a distant post was on an official visit to Korsakoffsk, and, as the resident officers were intent on making his visit as agreeable as they could, their mess dinners during his stay were the occasion of a little extra jollification.

After one of these simple but lively repasts, at which I also was present, it was proposed that, as the day was so fine, we should all take a drive, in the course of which they would call and introduce me to "*la belle femme*," of whom they had so often spoken, but whose face I had never yet

## Women Exiles

seen. Among themselves they called her "Sara."

Taking a road leading along a valley to the northeast, one of the only two roads which led from Korsakoffsk, and the only one going directly inland, the whole party of us started off like soldiers out for a holiday, all three *droschkis* racing each other to see which of us should be the first to salute the wonderful creature of whom I had so long been hearing.

By what appeared to me an accident of courtesy, the visiting major, who was also the ranking officer present, had the fastest horses, and he took a wild delight in showing me how recklessly he could drive, and how far we could leave the others behind.

On the right of the road, about three miles out, we reined up at the respectable-looking gates of a solid and unusually high fence, which completely inclosed what seemed to be a good-sized farm-house, with yard and outbuildings. My friend the major, who sprang from the *droschki* in order to win the first prize, found, to his evident chagrin and disappointment, that the gates were barred.

After knocking several times, we heard a merry laugh from within, the meaning of which seemed to be that Sara was at home, but not to us for the present, and that we must wait. A

## Prisoners of Russia

few minutes after the others had come up, and all had hitched their horses, the wooden bar was pulled back, the gate was opened, and behold, the belle of Sakhalin stood before us!

She greeted us in a way that showed that, like England, she expected every man to do his duty, and, so far as her Russian friends were concerned, she had no reason to feel disappointed in their salutations. As there were several lively young heifers in the yard, the gates were quickly closed behind us, and the house was taken possession of, as if by rollicking schoolboys.

There was plenty of milk, bread and butter, and everybody helped himself as if he were an old and privileged friend. Our unexpected visit had surprised her at a moment when she could not see others even of such importance as ourselves. I think there was a back gate. She was evidently not only surprised but embarrassed, and perhaps for sufficient reason. Sara greatly interested me. The impressions she made upon me were surprise, admiration, and deep repulsion. I think that she was about the wildest, most generous and handsome animal I had ever encountered.

She was tall, of perfect proportion, and, although over thirty, as lithe as a cat. Her face was an elongated oval, with a faultlessly Grecian

## Women Exiles

nose. Her complexion was mellow, warm, clear, like a dark, full-ripened peach. She had a wonderful wealth of dark hair, and eye-brows to match. Her profile was thoroughly distinguished, but her principal attraction and power lay in her eyes. It was not only in their exceptional largeness, nor in the graceful sweep of her long eye-lashes, but chiefly, I think, in the marvellous brilliancy which the lashes veiled. In this particular I think I have never seen their equal. When she laughed, however, and displayed her black and broken teeth, my only feeling was entire repulsion. This defect, to me so shocking, would be entirely unnoticed, however, by my friends of Sakhalin, where, in the total absence of dentists, nearly every adult mouth is a scene of neglect. Though there was no attempt at concealment, I did not see all that passed, and so even if I would I could not describe it.

There were two good-looking children in the house, of whom it was simply known that Sara was their mother. In a room off the kitchen I espied behind a door the overcoat of a policeman, belonging, as I afterward learned, to the man who was her present husband, so to speak.

Both the farm-yard and the house were well stocked, and in every way it was evident that

## Prisoners of Russia

Sara was not only prosperous, but comparatively rich in her own right. I had no doubt but that this wild, untamed beauty could have and do almost anything her caprice might dictate, and that scarcely any officer in Korsakoffsk could command greater influence or immunity in case of need.

By birth Sara was a Circassian gipsy. She became the favourite mistress of a prince in the Caucasus, whom she murdered in favour of one of his enamoured rivals. For this and other wanton crimes of a similar nature she was finally exiled to Sakhalin. It was evident, however, that her wild caprices were still untamed, and that the career of which one shuddered to think was perhaps even yet far from its termination.

As we were driving home, I remarked to one of my friends that, while they were in a certain apartment, I had seen some man disappearing into one of her back rooms. To this the officer replied, "Oh, yes, trust him; he knows well enough when to keep out of the way."

All that I learned regarding the punishments of women can be given in a few words. The mere accident of sex gives every woman pretty nearly the same general exemption as a title of nobility gives a man. For special crimes committed in Sakhalin women may be sentenced to special punishments, but, if the sentences are

## Women Exiles

carried out at all, it is with so much consideration as to amount to little more than a formality.

I think it would be strictly within the facts if I should say, that for fresh crimes in Sakhalin, if committed by women, there is scarcely even a pretence at the administration of justice.

I have given an account of the remarkably cold-blooded and atrocious third murder committed by the woman Lobanoff, who entertained me in the very room in which a few hours before she had committed the tragic butchery. As my unpleasant association with this case naturally gave me a keen interest in everything incident to the punishment of the murdereress, I lost no opportunity of questioning officers as to the progress of the prosecution and its results.

Three days after the discovery and confession, I remarked to the chief of the Korsakoffsk police that I was surprised that Lobanoff had not yet arrived at the prison, and asked him what course was to be taken, and when she would be tried. Would she be flogged, or tried by court-martial and hanged? Note his answer:

"My dear sir, what can we do with a woman? There's no place for her in the Korsakoffsk prison, and if there were, what good would it be to take her there? Only extra cost

## Prisoners of Russia

to the Administration. You know as well as I do that we can't flog a woman. She is not a subject for a court-martial, so she can't be hanged."

"Well," I said, "you will certainly have to do something with her. When will she be tried?"

"What's the good of going to the trouble of a trial? She has confessed everything, and boasts of it all. A trial would be a mere farce under such circumstances."

"But where is she now at this moment?"

"Why, at home—where else would she be? Don't you think that's the best place for her?"

There she remained, and the rival of the murdered man soon reigned in his stead.

I have given this particular case in detail, partly because of my close personal acquaintance with it, and partly because I think that it covers fairly well some others which I know only by report. I was told that cases of this type, both as to the cause of the crime and the immunity from punishment, were not very infrequent in Sakhalin, and I almost regretted that in such instances women should not get the rights to which their equality with men entitles them.

For the larger part, the faces of these exile women are heavy and hard, blank and impas-

## Women Exiles

sive; if at all positive, they are sullen and resentful. By thirty or thirty-five they are pretty sure to be minus several front teeth, which are never replaced. This latter condition in some degree belongs not only to both sexes, but to all classes in Sakhalin. In no part of the world have I been so deeply taught by contrast to appreciate the amount of personal comeliness which modern society owes to the artful implements of skilful dentistry.

While on the subject of female beauty, or rather ugliness, among the exile women in Sakhalin, I may remark that, with the exception of the two wanton assassins I have mentioned, few other instances occur to me in which any one of the women had any excuse for the slightest personal vanity. Much worse than their features, however, is their expression. I think I can recall about four faces of women and ten faces of men of this lower convict class in all Sakhalin in which I have seen a little light relieving and offsetting the predominant shade.

If from one of these unfortunate creatures you happened to hear a pleasant and cheerful word, it seemed to come through them, not from them, the expression of the face, like that of a ventriloquist, being rigidly at variance with the words uttered.

It is not only because of the regulation that

## Prisoners of Russia

convicts in Sakhalin, as elsewhere, do not look at the person to whom they speak, but for a deeper reason; and every part of the person, every attitude and motion, come to be unconsciously expressive of their condition and grade.

In these unfortunates the more conspicuous personal features are: stooping shoulders, drooping head, mouth drawn down, restless eyes which seem to see not, ears which seem to hear not, arms limp, hands with the open fingers hanging by their own weight pendant by the side, a gait which is loose, shuffling, purposeless—all suggestive of beings who are dead as to purpose, though still animate.

A native Siberian has no need to ask a stranger or a night beggar whether he is a Russian or not. In such old convicts the features, attitudes, motions, have become almost as marked, quite as indelible as some of those which distinguish a distinct nationality or a different race.

In Europe and in America, over and over again, detectives have told me that they know at once if a stranger is an old jail-bird the moment they set eyes on him, whatever may be his disguise. This is one of the things most detectives are apt to be conceited about. Ask one of them, however, how he knows, and with a complacent smile his instructive answer will be: "Ah! now

## Women Exiles

you've got me. I can't tell you what it is, but I know it the minute I see it."

It may be true, as alleged, that some of these acquired criminal marks and mannerisms are even transmitted to posterity. By those who believe this, instances are easily discoverable. The Sakhalin peculiarities of expression are rather due to a purposeless, hopeless apathy.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE KNOUT, ITS USE AND EFFECTS

THE resources of the Administration in the matter of additional punishments for local crimes are exceedingly limited.

These consist in bad-character marks, with prolonged prison residence in accordance with them; diet punishments; chains, particularly leg-chains and manacles; assignment to a chain-gang when engaged in quarrying, road-making, or other work outside the prison; and perhaps the attachment of one end of the prisoner's chain to his wheel-barrow.

For crimes of extreme gravity there are two other forms of punishment. The first of these is whipping and flogging. This, if by the knout, can only be inflicted after a special criminal process of law and a sentence of the court to that effect, also a medical examination and reaffirmation of sentence within eight hours of its execution. The birch can be ordered by the Governor at any time. The second punishment I scarcely ought to include, as, according to

## The Knout, Its Use and Effects

Russian law, it is not within the power of any ordinary legal tribunal to order or to inflict it. I refer to hanging and shooting.

It is within the power of the ordinary court of law to find a true bill of high treason against a criminal. In that case the prisoner may be retried by court-martial, and this court, on conviction, can sentence the prisoner to be hanged or shot. This course might be taken, say, for the murder of a high official, but it is so unusual that, so I was told, only one person had ever been hanged in the whole island, and that was for the killing of an official.

For extreme crimes, then, the principal and almost only punishment available is some kind of whipping or flogging.

During the worst days of Australian exile, the frequent executions, instead of suppressing crime, created among the convicts a positive mania for being hanged. It is alleged that, strange as it may seem, the contagion became so strong that convicts killed on the spot strangers who crossed their path, for no reason or motive except to secure for themselves a public execution with all the tragic and impressive distinction it implied. Without attempting at this moment to give a psychological explanation, I may remark, that, after extensive observation and inquiry, I cannot find that in Sakhalin or any-

## Prisoners of Russia

where in Siberia there has ever been a corresponding mania for being flogged.

In comparing the value of the two kinds of punishment as deterrents, this contrasting fact would, I think, be generally acknowledged as distinctive, and should be allowed its relative significance.

The floggings in Sakhalin are of different kinds, as well as of different degrees. The most dreadful kind to witness, or to receive, is by the knout.

The Rev. Mr. Lansdell says, in his excellent book, that he tried all through Siberia to hunt up a knout, but could not find one, even in a museum, until he reached Nickolaivsk, on the far eastern coast.

Flogging with rods, or what in English public schools is called birching, is the kind more commonly practised throughout the island.

I have not been able to find a book of travels, or even a romance, containing a description of a case of flogging by the knout, which the author himself pretended to have witnessed.

Such a pretension, if made, would need to be accompanied by a special explanation, for, as is well known, such scenes are not allowed to be witnessed except by officials whose duty compels them to be present, and by possibly some

## The Knout, Its Use and Effects

prisoners to whom the spectacle may be expected to be useful.

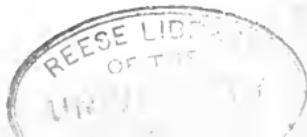
The officials dare not, the prisoners cannot, publish accounts of such scenes. It is very certain that foreign travellers would be the very last persons who would be invited to such spectacles.

For nearly twenty years the use of the knout in flogging has been prohibited as a regular practice throughout the whole of continental Siberia. In Sakhalin alone is its use still generally and legally continued; and as up to the time of my visit no English-speaking author had ever been able to reach the island, any descriptions of the punishment could have been only from hearsay.

It appears that in 1890, out of about twelve thousand convicts in Sakhalin, five hundred and eighty-three were flogged in one way or another. In how many of these cases the knout was used, I was unable to ascertain.

Special interest, therefore, may be found in the fact that it fell to my lot to witness a case of flogging by the knout, with all its attendant circumstances, from beginning to end, and that I was in one way a participator in a part of the official proceedings attending the execution of the horrible sentence.

This came about, as will be seen, by an accidental concurrence of circumstances, in which



## Prisoners of Russia

everybody concerned, except perhaps myself, was entirely blameless. These circumstances were such as could have been arranged beforehand by no amount of ingenuity, and they made it possible for the Governor to give his consent to my presence with safety.

It may be remembered that I mentioned in my account of my first day in Sakhalin a ceremonious visit to the Governor by a newly arrived official, preparatory to his assuming the duties of his position as the civil medical officer of the Korsakoffsk settlement.

The duties incumbent on this officer included the medical surveillance of the prison, medical attendance upon prisoners, all the civil officials and their families, and upon all others in the settlement of Korsakoffsk, excepting only the officers and men of the military garrison, which had its own military surgeon.

The reports of a drowning accident had caused me to hurry down to the beach, where I found this gentleman, Dr. A—, endeavouring to resuscitate the patient. Asking him where he had learned the method of artificial respiration he was employing, he told me that it was the American method, known as the “direct method” of Professor Howard, and that he had learned it in St. Petersburg. He was immensely astonished at finding that the

## The Knout, Its Use and Effects

person who was showing his pleasure and success in the returning life of the patient was himself the author of the method, and from that day onward, both in the hospital and out of it, Dr. A—— treated me with as much consideration and respect as if I were the senior physician of the post, and he merely an assistant.

Judged by the estimate many people have of a Russian prison surgeon, Dr. A—— would be a disappointment in nearly every particular. His dignified, courtly, and gentle learning suggested that, but for accidental circumstances best known to himself, he would more naturally have been a popular ladies' doctor in Moscow or St. Petersburg.

When not otherwise engaged, it was in his pleasant companionship that, either in the outdoor or indoor department of the hospital, I frequently passed my morning hours. At other times, by day and night, the hospital was at my disposal as one of the points of view in which and from which to study the Sakhalin system.

What with the indoor patients and the outdoor patients together, his morning's work was rarely finished before twelve o'clock.

On a certain Saturday, as Dr. A—— and myself were walking away from the hospital much earlier than usual (why, I didn't know), I observed, what was very unusual in him, that he

## Prisoners of Russia

was unconsciously but intently knitting his brows, was trying to look straight down upon the ground as he walked, and was very absent.

In a playful way I said, "My good Doctor, it seems to me you are thinking of something which is in front of you." At this profound remark he cast a comical glance at the only two buttons he was capable of seeing upon his comfortably filled-out waistcoat, and good-naturedly replied: "Yes, you are quite right. There's more before me just now than I like. I have to be at the court at eleven o'clock to examine a prisoner. He has been condemned to receive the maximum legal sentence of a hundred lashes by the knout. To-day is the flogging day, and if I decide that he can live through it, the sentence will be executed almost immediately. He is a weakly sort of a creature, and I feel very anxious about taking the responsibility of it. At the same time, as you know, I am a new man here, and it might be unpleasant for me to venture to obstruct the execution of a sentence passed by the court, except for reasons which would be manifestly unquestionable. The fact is, I was just thinking if I couldn't manage to get you to help me through the matter. You see, as you have been a university professor and are a guest of the Governor, a professional concurrence on your part would fortify

## The Knout, Its Use and Effects

fy my position, whatever it might be, and make it impregnable."

"All right," said I. "There is but one condition I must insist upon, and that is, I must have a free hand, and say just what I find true in the case. For the rest, you may reckon on me to the end of the chapter."

Thereupon we walked direct to the court-house. On entering the court-room, we found the Governor already there, also the police clerk, the clerk of the court, and another officer.

On entering, I thought that the face of my friend, the Governor, betrayed a shade of surprise and only half-concealed annoyance at my presence. The doctor, whom he beckoned, had a *sotto voce* interview with him, and on returning to me said, in a rather embarrassed way, that he had explained to the Governor his reasons for requesting my assistance, and that it was all right.

It did not escape my attention, however, that this was the first morning that the Governor and I had been so long apart from each other, and as the matter in hand was of more than usual interest and importance, it would have been natural for him to have mentioned this event to me unless, upon the whole, he had preferred that I should not know of it.

While I fully sympathized with his appar-

## Prisoners of Russia

ent regret at seeing me there, the impending event was to myself of such very exceptional though painful interest that (if I must confess it) I fully intended that nothing less than a direct refusal on his part should balk my purpose of seeing the sad business through to its very end.

Over the magisterial bench were the usual large coloured chromos of the Czar and the Czarina. Except for a seat for the clerk, there were no seats, benches, or other furniture in the court-room, for no audience is ever there to use them.

In a few minutes the clanking of chains and the tramp of a military guard on the staircase outside indicated that the culprit had arrived in the building. The Governor took his seat in the imposing magisterial chair, and a green baize cover was removed from what looked like a beautiful silver epergne. This, like the mace in some other countries, symbolized the royal presence. Having done this, the clerk, who, like the Governor, was in full uniform, with much formality took his official seat.

At a sign from him, the folding-doors were thrown back, and the guard, consisting of five soldiers, two of whom carried cocked revolvers, brought in the prisoner, who was heavily man-

## The Knout, Its Use and Effects

acled. His chains bound his ankles, legs, waist, and wrists; by the latter he was also attached to a soldier on each side of him.

The clerk having read the indictment and the verdict, the prisoner was stripped to the waist, and Dr. A—— asked to examine him. This each of us did, both separately and together.

In our consultation which followed, the final questions to be answered were: "Will the execution of the sentence probably prove fatal?" I was obliged to confirm Dr. A.'s finding in this, that there was no organic disease of the heart or of the lungs, and that the circulatory system was essentially sound. Beyond that, however, I distinctly declined to go. I said that, having had no experience in this form of punishment, I could form no opinion as to the prisoner's ability to bear it. That point I must leave entirely to the more experienced judgment of Dr. A——, who announced that he could not presume to intervene between the sentence of the court and its execution by a mere opinion, unless that opinion was based upon such an organic lesion as could, if required, be verified by another surgeon.

On receiving this decision, the Governor reaffirmed the sentence of the court, and ordered it to be executed. The proceedings were duly

## Prisoners of Russia

recorded in the presence of the prisoner, who was then marched back to the prison.

I had supposed that we should at once proceed to the place of execution, but, much to my relief, on the breaking up of the court, the Governor took me across to the neighbouring house of a military officer, where it was apparent that our arrival was no surprise, for the first unusual thing which attracted my attention was a dinner-table in the back garden, which was spread for four, whereas the family of our host consisted only of one, he being a bachelor.

Our *al fresco* dinner passed off perhaps with a little less spirit than was usual, and I think it is more true than he would have it known, that the Governor was considerably depressed by his approaching task. Observing his humour, I talked on a dozen other topics, but rigidly avoided the subject which I knew engrossed the thoughts of both of us.

As he and I neared the entrance to the prison together, much to my surprise, instead of entering it, he wheeled sharply to the right and entered his own house just opposite. I then seriously began to think that out of consideration for his feelings I ought to go off somewhere and cease to embarrass him with my company any longer.

On our entering the house, however, the

## The Knout, Its Use and Effects

dinner, which had all this time been kept waiting for us, was instantly announced and hurried forward by Madame S——. We all sat down together, the Governor and I appearing as innocent as possible of the dinner we already had taken.

By the time this second meal was over it was getting well on to four o'clock; still not a word had passed between us except about various things, in which neither of us just then felt any earthly interest.

Much to my relief, Dr. A—— now walked into the house, and, as he was shuffling about with a good deal of uncertainty of manner, I joined him in an accidental way, and casually remarked interrogatively that, as it was so late, I presumed that the intended event had been postponed. A suppressed half-whispered "impossible" was his only answer.

By the clank of the Governor's sabre in the adjoining room, I knew that he was rigging himself up in official fashion, and a moment after, without a remark except his gruff "Khorosh—Pashol" (all right—go ahead), we three were walking off together across the street to the great prison gates just opposite.

Passing through the central quadrangle and to the right up to the most northerly one, of which I have previously spoken, we found a cor-

## Prisoners of Russia

poral's guard drawn up near its centre. A few paces farther up, in front of the kamera for the worst of the criminals, and just on the crest of the hill, stood a large, low, rather narrow, and very solid-looking wooden bench or table about fourteen inches high, having in its top pairs of slit-shaped perforations. This was the "kablyla," or marl—i. e., the flogging-table.

From the kamera close beyond, two guards brought forth the criminal. Dr. A—— stepped forward and again examined his chest for a moment.

Being divested of his manacles by his guard, the prisoner laid himself full length upon the kablyla as directed, face downward. By straps passed through the perforations in the top of the table, he was immovably secured to it by the ankles, legs, chest, and arms, much after the manner seen at "La Roquette."

About eight paces in front of the head of the kablyla stood, from right to left, the corporal's guard, the Governor, the civil surgeon, and myself. Close beside the culprit, on the left, stood a subordinate official (the marker) with a large memorandum-book in his hand. At different open doors and windows, heads of convicts could be seen crowded together, all breathlessly waiting for the appearance of the executioner.

## The Knout, Its Use and Effects

From the same kamera from which the culprit had come, a tall, stalwart man now stepped forth. His face was stern, but without malice. He had in his hand what appeared at first sight to be a short-handled, long bullock whip. As he came forward he drew the multiple thongs through his fingers in an expert fashion as if to straighten them, stalked three or four paces in a straight line from the kabyla on its right, and marked the distance with his heel. This man was the executioner. With military precision he planted his right foot firmly on the marked spot, and, raising his hand as high as he was able, with a clever wrist movement sent the thongs swishing backward and forward, the hiss ending with a ping like that of a Minie bullet. Slightly changing the position of his foot, he repeated this proceeding two or three times. He was simply measuring his stroke.

Fixing himself with extra firmness in his latest position, the executioner skilfully kept the lash poised in the air, as an eagle poises when about to dart upon its prey. Fully assured now of his accuracy, he shot a swift and impatient glance at the Governor, who, accustomed to the signal, sternly gave the final word of command. At least, I know that he commenced to give it, but before the word was fully out of his mouth, it was completely drowned by

## Prisoners of Russia

the shrieks and yells of the culprit. I could only just catch the voice of the executioner as he shouted loudly and deliberately, "N-u-m-ber one!" answered by that of the marker as he repeated and recorded it. I quickly began to appreciate what had appeared to me mere ostentatiousness in the preliminary stroke practice. For, having once been started, the executioner's strokes were as steady, as rhythmical, as precise, as if done by a steam-engine, and as unrelenting. Such was the precision of them, that at the end of the fifth there were exactly fifteen lines scoring the buttocks as evenly as if they had been marked by a piece of chalk. Their force so completely expelled the blood from the surface that with chalk the lines could not have been made whiter. By the wrist manœuvre the blows were applied with such carefully graded force that at the end of the first stage the part already attacked looked as if covered with an even sheet of white paper. There was not a drop of blood.

Up to this point, or about the twenty-fifth stroke, so violent were the attempts of the prisoner to struggle and to yell, that death from suffocation seemed as likely as from the flogging itself. Then came a dead silence.

The second stage commenced when the blood began to flow, and as this proceeded more and

## The Knout, Its Use and Effects

more freely, the victim appeared to revive and to come to life again. As a spectacle, this was the more horrible part of the punishment, though for the victim it was much less painful. At every blow, each of the three knout-ended thongs, like the claws and beak of a vulture, pecked out fragments of dripping flesh, which were scattered in all directions by the backward swing of the lash. To avoid them, the officers—who were in white uniform—and myself had to step back and back for a considerable distance. After the skin of the side attacked had been completely detached and scattered, the screams of the poor wretch subsided into groans and sobs. The excavation, now about the size and depth of a soup plate, being filled with overflowing blood, which poured over the edge of the table, the force of the blows was very much deadened. The deeper and deeper the ploughing, the less and the less was the pain.

At last, when it seemed as if the time would surely never arrive, the marker, all out of breath, shouted out, in a loud and prolonged voice, “F-i-f-t-y,” the number recorded. The Governor cried “Halt!”

At this point Dr. A—— stepped forward, felt the prisoner’s pulse, stepped back to the Governor, and made a report of the man’s condition. After a pause of about five minutes, the

## Prisoners of Russia

executioner and marker changed sides, like cricketers.

Again the executioner went through the same process as at the first starting. Again the final command was given, and with the same shrieks and yells on the part of the culprit and the same mechanical rhythm, persistence, and relentlessness on the part of the executioner, the scene continued until, to my infinite relief, a relief which I certainly think was shared by everybody else as well as by the culprit himself, the marker shouted out the welcome word "N-i-n-e-t-y-n-i-n-e." The hundredth stroke is always omitted as a token of imperial magnanimity.

When what remained of this poor wretch had been unstrapped, he was not dead, and his quivering body was borne away to the hospital. The kabyla, or flogging-table, was swilled with buckets of water, and during the drying of it I examined and experimented with the bloody knout.

The handle of this instrument was of thick wood, about eighteen inches long. The main thong was of stout rawhide, tied into a knot about eight feet from the handle, where it was split into three smaller thongs. These were about three feet long, the ends terminating, not in lead or iron hooks, as I have seen falsely

## The Knout, Its Use and Effects

alleged, but in knots so short and hard as to amount to almost the same thing. At the time I examined it, the thongs were nearly covered with blood-clots and clinging fragments of flesh. It was a most sickening object.

“However could you endure to witness such a dreadful scene?” This is a question which friends have asked me more than once. I need hardly say that such a trip as I was taking was not entered upon chiefly for enjoyment, but rather for personal knowledge beyond dispute.

Of all reported Siberian cruelties, there was not one the alleged facts about which had been so much disputed, and which had remained so much unverified by actual observation, as this form of punishment, and the precise method in which it was carried out. When, therefore, the opportunity of settling these points in an authentic manner at last occurred, I could not allow myself to turn my back upon it. On behalf of the rest of mankind, I felt it my duty to endure the ordeal, that they might have at least one authentic description of it.

Another thing which more than anything else, perhaps, made it possible for me to endure the strain which otherwise, I must confess, would have been intolerable, was the established, terrible, and incorrigible barbarity of the culprit.

## Prisoners of Russia

This prisoner could not be classed even with the average of murderers. Constitutionally, he belonged to the meanest, most cowardly, merciless, and irreclaimable of all the varieties of criminals in Sakhalin, and he looked all that he was. He had no admixture of a single noble quality sometimes found in an assassin. He was primarily a petty, sneaking, pilfering thief, and this vice of covetousness overruled every other passion. On two occasions before being sent to Sakhalin, he had been guilty of murder. In each case the victim was a friend, and in both cases his only motive was gain.

During his recent two years' incarceration there had been nothing to tempt him to steal, so in the absence of bad marks he had been conditionally released, and thereupon taken into the employ of a free convict, who, living alone, was supposed to have saved a little money. This man, his benefactor, in accordance with his habitually indulgent manner, had, at the request of his new employee, started down the steps of his cellar to get him a present of some potatoes, when the wretch had struck him a fatal blow from behind, buried his body in the garden, and ransacked the house for the supposed savings, which, when found, turned out to be less than ten roubles.

As this man had been free to go where he

## The Knout, Its Use and Effects

chose over a considerable area, any official or other person supposed to have money about him, even myself, might just as easily have become his victim.

I have abated nothing in the description I have given of the flogging scene, and I am free to confess that, though I had, officially or otherwise, witnessed every judicial form of execution except that by electricity, this of flogging with the knout was the most painful and revolting within my experience.

I may be told that such a proceeding as I have described is a standing disgrace to Russia and to civilization. I will not trouble to dispute these customary denunciations; but, taking into consideration the nature of the crime, that of the culprit, the insecurity of officials, the fact that there was no other punishment in Sakhalin which this wretch would fear—taking all these circumstances together, I would simply ask the critic, “Had you been Governor, what milder punishment would you have substituted for it?”

It may be of interest to add, that after other floggings of a minor character had been given to other prisoners for other recent offences, I accompanied Dr. A—— to the hospital, and found the flogged assassin in one of the best beds in the best ward, where everything had

## Prisoners of Russia

been carefully prepared for his reception. In the dressing of his wounds, the selection of his diet, as well as in the personal attention of the nurses, there was neither stint nor limitation so far as the resources of the Hospital Department permitted.

In the nature of the case his treatment called for very little medicine, but rather for moderate stimulation and all the nourishment he could take, and as he suffered very little actual pain, his condition and prospects were regarded by some of the other patients as being rather enviable than otherwise.

To an ordinary observer, and indeed to anybody, his wound was certainly sufficiently shocking, for the entire surface fell into a shade of gangrene and sloughed away in pultaceous masses, leaving an excavation which, for size and depth, I have never seen equalled except in a few cases of shell wounds on the field of battle.

As the process of repair was necessarily a long one, the treatment, which had to be most generous, gave him a long period of such luxury as might by many of his class be regarded as a good offset, if not sufficient compensation, for his punishment.

This is not the place for a medical history of the case. Those who are interested in it may

## The Knout, Its Use and Effects

find it on page 484 of the London Lancet of 1891. It is, so far as I know, the only one of its kind duly recorded in any medical journal in Europe.

In this published account, I felt constrained to speak in the highest terms of the "humane, gentle, and kind" manner in which the medical treatment was conducted, and accordingly got credit in England for having written thus merely to please my Russian friends.

The largest number of strokes with rods I have seen given at one time is fifty.

In this case, the culprit was a very strong man, and the court proceedings immediately preliminary, as also the medical examination, described in the case of flogging with the knout, did not take place. The prisoner, who was without manacles, and unattended by any guard, came out alone from the same northern kam-era, walked direct to the kabyla and was strapped down upon it in the same manner as the other one had been. The executioner and the recorder or marker likewise took up their respective positions, except that the executioner stood much nearer to his victim.

On the ground at his right lay a bundle of rods, one or two of which, after examination, he selected and laid on the top of the bundle. Then, without any preliminary distance mark-

## Prisoners of Russia

ing, he intimated in a minute or two that he was ready.

At the word of command from the Governor, the executioner, his rod already raised above his head, brought it down upon the exposed buttocks with his accustomed deliberation and precision.

The "number one" which he shouted was duly reiterated and recorded by the marker, the process being continued with mechanical precision, except for a momentary halt for a new rod, until number fifty was reached, when the halt always called at this number was final.

The part attacked during this proceeding assumed various shades, white, red, and blue succeeding and commingling with each other, but right up to the end there was not a drop of blood apparent, though in places the skin seemed considerably broken.

A fact for which I felt particularly grateful was that from first to last this plucky fellow did not utter a sound, and jumped up when he was unstrapped as if he thought that he had got what he deserved and was thoroughly satisfied with it.

He stepped back to his kamera as lively as he had come out, and, though I expected him in the outdoor department of the hospital after-

## The Knout, Its Use and Effects

ward, I never saw or heard anything more of him.

I afterward examined the rods provided for this occasion. They were about half as large again, perhaps, but otherwise not unlike those employed on the sons of English noblemen by very good and kind masters at Eton and other public schools. The number of strokes given varies greatly—indeed, it may be as low as ten. I have been told by persons who have never been in Russia that the number is sometimes as many as a thousand. However, fifty is the highest number I have myself ever seen given at one time, the effect being generally about the same as that just described.

It is unnecessary to remark on the capriciousness of “public sentiment,” especially on subjects with which the public has no personal acquaintance.

For a certain period public sentiment abolished flogging totally in England, and without discrimination, because it was degrading to humanity, and forthwith and ever since a part of that humanity has indulged in battering other parts of humanity, especially wives and children, to such a degree that a reaction has taken place, and the English bench has returned to flogging as the best remedy in certain cases.

Before I went to Siberia I was myself in-

## Prisoners of Russia

clined to join the chorus of foreign protest against all flogging in Russia, particularly as practised in Siberia. On a near and intimate acquaintance with all the conditions in Sakhalin, however, I became convinced that I had been looking through the wrong end of the telescope—not at facts, but at fictions based on facts.

In the days of Australian exile, it was not the worst criminals of England that were sent to that colony—they were hanged at home.

I have mentioned elsewhere that among these exiles hanging was not held in such dread, either in England or Australia, as to be a deterrent; that, on the contrary, in Australia it came to be regarded as rather a distinction; that instead of acting as a warning, it gave the stimulus of example, and that at times this was so infectious that many convicts committed murder for no other reason than to secure the sensation of a public execution.

I need hardly repeat that in Sakhalin, on the contrary, the larger proportion of the exiles are criminals of the very first class, corresponding, as a class, to the murderers who in England are soon to be hanged.

With some of the men in Sakhalin, sentiment or any moral sense seems in too many instances either never to have existed, or to be completely in abeyance. The only sense which

## The Knout, Its Use and Effects

can with any confidence be appealed to is that of fear, and, so far as my observation goes, the only thing they dread and shrink from is physical pain. As regards this, many of those who are otherwise the most incorrigible, are the most shrinking cowards.

I have never known or heard of one of this class for whom the knout came to have any fascination. A flogging with the knout confers no distinction; an ambition for it has never by infection become epidemical. It is never regarded by a convict with equanimity, nor is tolerance of it acquired by experience of it. By each and all of them the knout never ceases to be regarded with supreme dread.

In the absence of magnificent prisons, unlimited warders, and separate appliances for every variety of carefully graded punishments, flogging as a substitute seems to be in Korsakoffsk the only efficient and final reliance within the means of the Administration.

The arguments adduced in favour of the knout are, that it is inexpensive, convenient, prompt, can be used anywhere at any time, and confers no public distinction as offset to the punishment; that it is a form of punishment which can be repeated at discretion, with full opportunities for reform in the intervals; that it can be exactly regulated according to the crime;

## Prisoners of Russia

and that, as the maximum sentence is never carried out except for crimes which in other countries would incur capital punishment, the knout, by comparison, allows the victim many chances in his favour.

It is further pointed out that the supreme fear of the knout is with many prisoners the only deterrent, and that in the prisons this fear is of greatest help to a short-handed staff of officials in the maintenance of discipline; that under the loose, gregarious methods now in vogue in the prison management, it is only by the maintenance of the knout or of some other form of corporeal punishment equally swift, sure, and dreaded, that convicts can be protected against each other, or deterred from rioting and massacre.

“Am I to understand, then, that you actually approve of such a barbarous practice as the use of the knout in Sakhalin?” is a question which in very deprecatory tones has been put to me more than once by philanthropic friends for whom I have the greatest esteem, but who have never seen Russia.

My answer has been, “Try to imagine yourself in the place of any one of the officers unfortunately on duty in Korsakoffsk, impotent for reform, compelled to enforce existing regulations as he finds them, his own life in constant

## The Knout, Its Use and Effects

peril from murderers inside his own house, and from the hundreds more outside of it on every hand."

In connection with such questions it must always be borne in mind that Siberia is in Asia, that Sakhalin is farther from European Russia than even Siberia proper, that even the European Russians profess themselves, very properly, to be as yet but partly civilized, and that the mass of the exiles are at best only the very dregs of that partial civilization as found in semi-barbarous Asiatic provinces.

I do not hesitate to say that a personal knowledge and experience of the actual conditions in Sakhalin would be a very valuable help to such as feel it their duty to deliver a public judgment on the alleged barbarity of the knout, as compared with the refinement of hanging.

Contrasting the triangle whipping-posts found in all Her Majesty's prisons with the kabyla, or perforated table, used in the Russian prisons, I said in my report to the London Lancet: "From a medical standpoint the physical results of flogging as I have seen it in its various forms in Siberia have disappointed me. In every case the primary shock, and also the secondary shock, have been less than I had looked for.

" Bearing in mind the fatal results alleged to

## Prisoners of Russia

have occurred when flogging was in vogue in the English army, I am inclined to think that the better endurance of Russian victims may be partly explained by the horizontal position maintained during the flogging. The fact that the head is all the time lower than the heart, is calculated to restrain the tendency to syncope so common in the perpendicular position. As regards the position of the culprit during flogging, a more cruel and dangerous method than the triangle could hardly be devised, and I am very much astonished that in Her Majesty's prisons this or an upright wooden post still continues to form a part of the prison armamentarium."

## CHAPTER XII

### LIFE OF THE OFFICIALS—DANGERS OF CRUELTY

It certainly cannot be said that the lot of the great majority of the officials in Sakhalin is altogether a happy one. So well and generally is this understood that, except in the agricultural and scientific departments, when an officer in St. Petersburg or any part of European Russia is promoted to a post in Sakhalin, I believe it is common to ask what he has done.

Officials of various grades have told me of their own accord the amount of actual pay they received, and I must confess that it seemed so small as to be unfavourable to official integrity of administration. If I remember correctly, I was told that the official pay of the Governor at Korsakoffsk does not exceed two hundred and fifty roubles a month and quarters, or, say, two to three thousand dollars a year, an amount which I should think must be a mere item in the total outlay his position requires.

A staff officer, who was a captain of several years' standing, told me that his pay was seventy

## Prisoners of Russia

roubles a month and quarters, or less than five hundred dollars a year. The priest, though he had several children, fared not much better, and any fees which elsewhere might have come to him must have been meagre to the last degree.

With the exception of one or two small rugs at the Governor's, I never saw a bit of carpet in any house in Korsakoffsk. In no other house did I see a room which was used exclusively as a bed-room. For the most part the bedsteads in use were merely trestle cots, which were either put up and taken down daily, or placed in any part of any room where they were least in the way.

Unlike some of the other unmarried officers, the staff captain I have mentioned had a fair-sized house to himself. Like all the others, it consisted of a single story. I had frequently passed through it, from the kitchen through the big, bare sitting-room, to an apartment beyond, and it had occurred to me more than once that I had never seen where my friend's bed-room was, or where, indeed, it could be. One morning, having to call for him for an early expedition, I unintentionally found it out.

In the large uncarpeted sitting-room was a very shabby sofa—not even a sofa-bedstead. It was this that was both his bed and bedstead. A special advantage about this simple arrange-

## Life of the Officials

ment is that it is never absolutely necessary to take off one's boots, and undressing in its full ordinary sense is superfluous.

I am not suggesting that this indifference to sleeping conveniences is peculiar to Sakhalin. In one of the largest cities in Siberia, where ordinary luxuries were easily to be had by those who could afford them, I have seen military officers, not only single but married also, content with a plain wooden shelf, inferior in finish, but otherwise not unlike the bunks in the steerage or forecastle of a passenger ship.

Whatever is included in the government commissariat is supplied to the officials at prices fixed by the Administration. Everything else is extremely expensive, except wines, spirits, and tobacco, which are obtainable by officers under special concessions.

As regards the cost of clothing, the officers have their own way of getting theirs, and, what with the tailoring and boot-shops in the prison, I judge that the outlay for it is a very small matter.

Judging from appearances, and from the total absence of fashion, I should think that the wardrobe expenses of the ladies and families must be still less. Whatever any lady might be wearing, it looked as if she and some ancestor had always worn it, and as if it could never have

## Prisoners of Russia

fitted worse than at that moment. Not corsets but comfort seemed to be the rule observed by all the ladies in Korsakoffsk.

As nearly as I can remember, I think that I never saw a single coin except in or from my own hands. The amounts played for at cards were never seen except as entries made in little memorandum-books. How mutual accounts were settled I never learned.

The duties of the officials cannot be said to be very exacting, yet none of them seemed to have any conception of any form of voluntary exercise.

Every officer wore spurs as a part of his uniform, and also, I suspect, that he might make the self-assertive and authoritative clank in walking; but not one of them, not even the Governor commanding the garrison, did I ever see on horseback. That may have been partly owing to the fact that only one of them owned an animal of any kind, and that was a dog. There were forty or more horses in the Governor's service, but they were government property, and no officer could use one of them except by permission of the Governor.

The most active officials were the military officers of the garrison, the commander of which was a keen disciplinarian who kept his officers and men in constant training, not only in their

## Life of the Officials

tactics, but more especially in their rifle practice, he himself being a very superior marksman. In this exercise he always generously invited me to join him, but I never succeeded in lowering his reputation in firing without a rest.

All the officials with rank seemed to have had a good education, and to have once on a time studied the modern languages—all, except English. They were not only intelligent, but in a remarkably uniform degree also vivacious, courteous, and amiable.

It did not seem to me, however, that the intellectual life of the settlement was dangerously high. I did not discover anybody in it who was a regular subscriber to a distant newspaper, nor did I ever see anybody in it reading one.

Respecting books it was somewhat different. I have spoken of the little high shelf of disused books of Madame S—, the wife of the Governor. Dr. A—, as a matter of course, had a few professional books. The priest also had a library, but he was very much amused and very apologetic when I asked him to show it to me. I should think that the books of every kind in Korsakoffsk may have numbered, all told, about forty.

The priest and myself did some translating together, but except at church I do not remem-

## Prisoners of Russia

ber to have seen anybody looking into a book during my entire stay on the island.

Officials are not troubled by the expenses of schooling, for, aside from the little institution maintained by Madame S—— for the children of exiles, there is no school in the settlement.

Mercifully there are very few children. The largest family is that of the priest, and his children are trained by himself. The children in the other families are quite young, and what little training they get is what they receive at home. I never saw an official take a drive, or a walk, alone merely for pleasure. To drive, he must get a *droschki* from the Governor. There are only one or two roads, that go along the coast to the right and along a valley to the left of the town, but it is considered unsafe for a single person to go far enough to make it interesting. I need not say that this would apply in a much greater degree to a pedestrian.

I never saw even two officials drive out together merely for pleasure but once, and that was on the occasion of the visit to "la belle femme," which I have described.

I never saw an officer drive a lady for pleasure except once, when we were going out for a picnic in considerable numbers, and then we did not venture more than a couple of miles from the town.



View near Alexandrovsk, Sakhalin.



## Life of the Officials

On one occasion, at her urgent request, the Governor consented to let me take a lady out a short distance to give her a riding-lesson, but after starting I was called back to make certain about the condition of my revolvers. Although this lady afterward begged the Governor to allow her to have the lesson repeated, it somehow happened that we did not go again.

It will thus be seen that the lives of the officials are only a little less circumscribed than the lives of the exiles themselves. Call them official exiles, or exiled officials, and in either case you will not be far wrong; either term will be tolerably correct.

It is not beside the truth to say that in their leisure time the occupations of the officers are narrowed down to this: During the day, eating, drinking, and cards; during the later hours, cards, eating, and drinking.

It must be admitted, however, that in many respects the position of the priest allows of an exception in his case. He possesses at least a dozen dusty books which pertain to his calling, and some of them he occasionally consults. He has no weakness either for eating, drinking, or cards, though he is always ready to take a moderate share in all of them.

His duties, too, are much more varied than those of the other officials. In addition to his

## Prisoners of Russia

church work, he has to keep numerous records, for as chaplain of the post he is a state officer as well as a priest. His life, like that of the ladies, is passed chiefly in his own uncomfortable house, except when he is in the church. Only on two occasions have I ever seen him out of doors except when going there or to the Governor's residence. His life, which appeared to me to be near perfection, is mainly that of a recluse. He is not only resigned to his position, but is content. Indeed, I cannot imagine any condition in which this rare, meek, humble-minded man would be or could be otherwise, if in the path of duty.

It is upon the wives and families, however, that the burden of this kind of life falls with the most crushing effect.

Except for a very occasional picnic, outdoor life they have absolutely none.

Outside of Korsakoffsk village, the nearest lady on whom the Governor's wife could call is two days distant, within an almost unbroken forest, dangerous in summer and impassable in winter, except by the dog-sledges which then traverse it for more than three hundred miles on postal service.

Within the village there are only five officials who are married. These five families alone constitute the circumference of the circle within

## Life of the Officials

which life is passed by an officer's wife, day after day, month after month, year after year, with scarcely a walk or a drive, or any sort of diversion or other interest, except the church. I do not say that this in itself is necessarily monotonous, but one can easily imagine that to some people it might become so.

After installing herself in whichever house is assigned to her husband, one first difficulty of an official's wife is in obtaining one or more suitable domestics.

The convict women who reach Sakhalin are, generally speaking, much more ignorant, vicious, and degraded than the men, as, before a woman is sentenced to that doom, every discrimination is made in her favour. As women convicts in Siberia are never runaways, none is forwarded to Sakhalin on this account. All come, therefore, only by sentence for an initial crime, or successive crimes, of the greatest magnitude. Of twenty convictions I inquired into, sixteen were for murder, and two for burning down houses with murderous intent.

I had been innocently congratulating one of the ladies on the fact, as I supposed, that she could have the pick of servants, and that the Administration would be glad to let her have as many of them as she liked without wages.

She quickly informed me that on that point

## Prisoners of Russia

there was certainly nothing to be congratulated about, that the “pick of servants” meant on her side an application for a domestic, and on the part of the Administration an assignment to her of one of the dreadful creatures I have described, if there was one available; “and mark you,” she added, “at a rate of wages fixed by the Administration.”

Having succeeded in getting somebody who is willing to come to her, the mistress will have to try to train her in even the most elementary duties, and, by a quiet course of kindness and of coaxing, to get the best she can out of her.

Although habit mitigates it, the mistress is never free from apprehension lest this domestic, always suspicious, may have her old murderous instincts aroused by some accidental word or incident. Once, when a lady complained to me, and with manifest reason, about one of these dreadful domestics, I asked, “But why don’t you send her back and get another?” Her answer was sententious. “Another! Yes, and perhaps a worse.”

As I have elsewhere mentioned, convict women are in great demand in other directions, and where they can have greater freedom. It is only the least attractive, the most obnoxious of the newcomers, therefore, who will consent to domestic service at all. It will be easy to be-

## Life of the Officials

lieve me, then, when I say of the domestics in Korsakoffsk, and I think I have seen them all, that of not one of them could it be said that she possessed what seemed like a single redeeming feature.

It might be supposed that the parlour-maid of the Governor would be an exception; yet I never felt safe when she was about, her murderous career was so vividly stamped on her face, her demeanour was so sullen, that when she brought my early morning cup of tea to my bedroom I invariably kept my eye on her movements until she was well out of the room again.

I judge that it is partly owing to the depravity and insufficiency of the domestics that steel knives and forks which would require cleaning are unknown. Instead, all these articles are of the common plated kind, which need only to be washed. I also noticed that an old-fashioned mangle weighted with stones has to do all the ironing, the latter process being apparently unfamiliar. The habits in wearing apparel, as in innumerable other things, have to be adjusted accordingly.

It was no wonder that, excepting the Governor, nobody ventured to keep more than one of these domestics at a time.

Each housewife accordingly endures a double form of slavery. On the one hand, out of

## Prisoners of Russia

fear, she has to be constantly compromising with her domestic; on the other, she is compelled to do with her own hands all work requiring any care or skill.

Add to this the reflection from which they can hardly be free—a reflection from which, during my own wakeful nights to the end of my stay in Korsakoffsk, I was never able to escape—that by a conspiracy between the domestics and the other murderers outside, this handful of families might at any moment be helplessly overwhelmed in conflagration and massacre, and I think it will be seen that even in summer the lot of these officials and their families is hardly an enviable one.

The sufferings of exiles, and especially those inflicted upon them, have been made familiar to all the world. So numerous have been the allegations, that the mere number of them seems overwhelming evidence of their undoubted truth.

In view of the situation I have just described, it needs little argument to show, what the facts fully corroborate, that any official who should habitually inflict needless cruelties upon the convict murderers by whom he is surrounded in Korsakoffsk, would quickly find his own life to be in such peril, that his official functions would be impracticable.

## Life of the Officials

The Sakhalin official who would dare to be officially inhuman, must be officially mad. That, nevertheless, some officials have been of that sort everybody is aware; but that some officials have been assassinated in consequence is not so well known, except to those it concerns.

Though the power of the Governor in Sakhalin is and must be nearly absolute, the exercise of it turns, after all, on a moral pivot.

I have known of several instances in which officials who have abused that power have been promptly stripped of it, and been made to change places with their victims.

Under the powers given, and necessarily given, to officials in such isolated places as Korsakoffsk, I admit that there is no cruelty of which any one of them has ever been accused but might be possible.

Therefore I would not venture to dispute any one of the multitude of accusations with which books of travellers and novelists abound. When I was spending a week at the Devonshire home of my friend, the late Lord Chief Justice Coleridge, he once remarked to me: "Yes, I can imagine conditions in which somebody should have absolute power, but I doubt if there is one man in a hundred thousand who could be safely trusted with it." In a semi-barbarous country this remark is particularly applicable. I

## Prisoners of Russia

have myself seen severity and what I thought cruelty by officers in Sakhalin, but it was certainly not premeditated. In each case the cruelty consisted of a blow from momentary irritation, and, what is important to note, in each case it was given by an officer whose popularity and habitual generosity made the act possible without endangering his own safety. I have often noticed, even in the chain-gangs, that any amount of severity would be submitted to with patience and with respect so long as it did not seem to be unjust. On more than one occasion, on the contrary, I have seen a warder turn pale with apprehension after he had been provoked to a momentary excess.

When, therefore, I read or hear of an instance of horrible cruelty, I always inquire who did it, whether the narrator saw it done, and what were the circumstances which led up to it. An exile, a convict, a murderer, might be quite capable of a truthful statement respecting the wrongs done to himself or his fellows; but stories retailed by foreign authors may sometimes be inaccurate in the form in which they reach the American or English reader.

Undoubtedly, the custody of those who have no rights may tend to the development of the more brutal elements. The vocation of the jailer, like that of the soldier, is likely to make

## Life of the Officials

him either a worse man or a better man. That depends upon what sort of a man he was at the beginning.

The prison officials of every grade most distinguished for their efficiency are the men who regard their work as a vocation, and of these I have met not many.

## CHAPTER XIII

### BAPTISM OF EXILE CHILDREN—THE BLESSING OF THE WATERS

ALTHOUGH I had often seen baptism performed in various parts of Siberia as well as of western Russia, I had never seen all of the rites belonging to complete induction into the Church in such order as to enable me to comprehend fully their relation to each other.

I had happened to remark this to my friend the priest, and was therefore not a little pleased on a certain Sunday morning to get a note from him asking me to remain in the church after the usual morning service, as there were to be some ceremonies which he thought might interest me.

After the main body of the congregation had left, I observed a curious and interesting group assembling in the lobby. The centre of this group was formed by five or six women with pillows in their arms; on each pillow was a very small babe. Each of these women was attended by another woman with a

## Baptism of Exile Children

little basket, the appearance and contents of which were such as are familiar to Russian monthly nurses. The neatness and comparative elegance of these little accessions were really touching and almost pathetic to me, knowing, as I did, the slender resources of the poor mothers and the tender affection and maternal pride the little knots of ribbon adorning the "things" signified. The rest of the group consisted, not of relatives (for in Sakhalin outside of the possible family relatives do not exist), but of friends who were present as sponsors.

I found that the infants were in various stages of induction, and that each stage would be represented, so that by the kind arrangement of the priest I should now see the whole process on this single occasion.

First were presented the infants that had not yet been made catechumens. These candidates having been gathered together by the deacon, the priest approached them, stripped them of all clothing except a single garment, placed them facing the east, breathed three times in their faces, signed them with the cross on foreheads and breasts, and, laying his hands on their heads, recited a prayer or invocation.

This was followed by four acts of exorcism. In the first act was a prayer, or rather an imprecation, which was very long, and began, "The

## Prisoners of Russia

Lord forbiddeth thee, O Devil," etc., and ending with, "Get thee away and depart from the sealed newly elected soldier of our God. Get thee away and depart from this creature with all thy might and angels."

After three other exorcising imprecations of similar import, the priest again breathed on the mouths, foreheads, and breasts of the candidates, and said: "Drive from him every evil and unclean spirit hiding and lurking in his heart."

Here followed the ritual for renunciation. In this the babies were again stripped. They were then turned towards the west, when the priest with uplifted hands said, "Dost thou renounce Satan and all his works and all his angels and all his service and all his pomp?" This, with the "I renounce" by the sponsors, was repeated many times. The priest: "Then blow upon him and spit upon him," which the sponsors did vigorously. The priest, now turning the infant towards the east, said, "Dost thou join Christ?" This, with the answer "I join," was repeated many times by the sponsors. The priest: "Dost thou believe in him?" The sponsors: "I believe in him as King and God." All present now united in the Athanasian creed, according exactly to the English version.

After many more repetitions of the question and of the answer to it, "I have joined," came

## Baptism of Exile Children

the obeisance and adoration. The priest said, "Bow thyself also unto him." As the sponsors complied, they said, "I bow myself to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost, to the consubstantial and undivided Trinity." The priest then recited a final prayer, and thus was completed the process of exorcism, renunciation, and illumination.

As these and two other infants were then presented and ranged about the font for baptism, the sacristan came forward in a very business-like way and poured into the font several buckets of warm water. When he had satisfied himself that this was of the right temperature, further preparation for the rite of baptism was made by anointing.

The sponsors and friends being all supplied with lighted tapers and ranged round the font in proper order, the priest approached in white garments, censed round about the altar, recited several prayers, and ended by saying three times, "Do thou thyself, therefore, O man-loving King, be present now also through the descent of thy Holy Ghost, and sanctify this water and give it the grace of redemption," etc.

He then three times signed the water with the cross, and recited a long prayer, that any demon or evil spirit lurking in the water might be crushed and expelled, etc. He now breathed

## Prisoners of Russia

three times upon a cruse of oil, signed over it three times with the cross, and after a prayer made three crosses upon the water with the oil.

The anointing of the infant with oil was performed thus: With a small camel's-hair pencil dipped in the oil the priest made the sign of the cross on the forehead, breast, and between the shoulders, and said, "The servant of God, —, is anointed with the oil of gladness in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, now and ever and to ages of ages. Amen."

Then, with appropriate words pertaining to the eyes, ears, hands, feet, and other parts, he used the pencil in the same manner on the respective parts, and thus ended the process of anointing with holy oil.

The rite of baptism consisted in the priest, who faced the east, taking the child by the knees with one hand, covering its face with the other, and adroitly passing the infant three times under the surface of the water, saying, "The servant of God, —, is baptized in the name of the Father, amen; and of the Son, amen; and of the Holy Ghost, amen. Now and ever to ages of ages. Amen."

I must confess that the adroitness and skilful rapidity with which this was done, as well as the

## Baptism of Exile Children

absence of egoism in the formula used, seemed to me most admirable.

Next came the investiture. As fast as the infants were dried, white chemises were handed from the baskets, and as the priest clothed each one, he said, "The servant of God, —, is invested with the robe of righteousness in the name of the Father," etc. After several prayers were recited came the anointing with holy myrrh. This was an exact repetition of the process already described, only that myrrh was substituted for oil, the priest saying in addition, "The seal of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

The circumambulation was now performed. In this the priest headed a procession of all concerned, marching round and round the font, singing three times, "As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluiah."

Prayers were now recited for "Our most pious, autocratic, great Lord the Emperor," and other members of the royal family by name, for the "most Holy Governing Synod," and for the "newly illuminated servants of God" (by name) just regenerated.

Two of the infants, which had remained in the background, because they had been submitted to these rites eight days ago, were now presented for the further and next to the last rite

## Prisoners of Russia

of induction, which is ablution. In the performance of this the priest loosened his own girdle and garment and recited a number of prayers. He then loosened the girdle and garment of each of the infants, joined the ends of each garment and girdle, soaked them with water, with which he sprinkled the child, and said, "Thou art justified, thou art illuminated, thou art sanctified, thou art washed in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

Taking a new sponge dipped in water, he now wiped the face, the head, and breast and other parts of the infant, saying, "Thou art baptized; thou art illuminated; thou art anointed with myrrh; thou art sanctified; thou art washed, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

This was immediately followed by the last induction rite of all, viz., tonsure of the hair. This process consisted in a long preliminary prayer, which first recited the value and importance of the divine gift of the hair of the head, and then proceeded that of this, "The servant of God, —, is now come to make his first offering," etc.

Other prayers followed, and the priest said, "Bow your heads to the Lord." This being done and other prayers said, the priest pinched up two little scraps of what hair he could find

## Baptism of Exile Children

on the top of the head, and with scissors clipped them in two directions crosswise, saying, "The servant of God, ——, is shorn in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

Finally, a prayer was offered in which the name of the Emperor, of the sponsor, and of the newly illuminated were recited together.

The actual receiving into the Church of the baptized was a very short procedure, each of them being brought into the middle of the church, and then to the gates of the temple, the priest taking a child in his arms and tracing with it the sign of the cross in front of the gates, saying, "The servant of God, ——, is received into the Church in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." He then carried the boys through the gates before the holy altar, but the girls he brought only as far as the royal gates, but not through them.

He then deposited each in succession on the daïs in front of the gates, whence the sponsors, bowing three times, took them up. The customary dismissal was then given, and all departed.

As I had never met a foreigner who had seen these various ceremonies in their order and entirely, I have related, as briefly as I could, their leading features as I witnessed them. To

## Prisoners of Russia

see them all, and in their proper order of succession, on a single occasion was an opportunity of very rare occurrence, and only came about by the special arrangements of my kind friend the priest, who is an exceptional enthusiast in his calling.

Throughout the proceedings, though my mind was on the ritual, my heart was with the poor exiled parents, to whom this ceremony was full of real, living, and perhaps far-reaching significance.

To themselves this meant that the sins of the father were lifted from the child, which was now made not only an orthodox member of the Church and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, but nominally a free and honourable citizen of Russia. The Czar, whom the father thought of only as his great devil, was thenceforward to this free child the "Great Father, Lord and King."

As has already happened in Australia, so here, in the coming years, these free native children will have the distinction of being the founders of the very first and oldest families of Sakhalin.

If anywhere a national church be expedient, conspicuously would it have an excuse for being in such a widespread and ignorant country as Russia. The common single source of the oil

## Baptism of Exile Children

and myrrh for prince, noble, and moujik alike throughout the Empire; the adroit linking together in the same prayer at the font the name of the Czar with those of the newly baptized infant and of the sponsor; these in conjunction with impressive symbols and utterances amid which the names of "Our great Lord the Czar" and that of the supreme object of worship are apt to get confused—all these things, I say, with the many symbols and ways tending to amalgamate the state and the church, seem admirably adapted in such a crude state of civilization to promote amity and reverent patriotism in the unwieldy and superstitious masses, for the control of which the Government can desire nothing better than the impression that religion and patriotism are synonymous and inseparable.

In the case of these unfortunates it must be felt that these ceremonies, with their sacred associations, can hardly fail to brighten their lot, helping some of them to the highest aspirations of which they are capable.

### THE BLESSING OF THE PUBLIC WELL

One week-day afternoon I observed an unusual number of people in the vicinity of the church, from which there shortly issued a procession having much the appearance of those seen especially about Easter time in the country

## Prisoners of Russia

towns and villages of Italy. I followed it along a very circuitous route until it arrived at the open space around the public well in common use by the families of the free convict part of the settlement, where I found was to be performed the annual ceremony of "the blessing of the waters."

In front of the well was placed a brocade-covered table, with the usual altar accessories, and in the centre a silver-plated tureen.

The procession, as it arrived, formed in front of the table in a semicircle, backed up by the village women, by everybody else whose time was of no value, and by five or six inquisitive pigs, which now and then insisted on breaking through to the front and impertinently joining the chants in the wrong key.

With two trees of unusual size forming the background to the altar, the scene, as the candles and tapers were lighted in the full daylight, was as humanly picturesque as anything I had encountered in these latitudes.

The priest having signed the mouth of the well with the cross and the censer three times, and said various prayers, the tureen on the table was filled with water from the well, and this again treated in a similar manner.

Many long prayers, most of which were to the Virgin, were then recited, asking that all the

## Blessing of the Public Well

waters of the settlement might be under her special protection, etc., and, of course, to these prayers were added others for the Emperor, Empress, and all the royal family.

The priest, raising the tureen in the air, made with it the sign of the cross, and blessed it. Using other parts of the liturgy meanwhile, he then kissed the cross. The worshippers thereupon approached and did the same, and as they came forward for this purpose, the priest, with the aspergillus, or little brush, sprinkled them all with the now sanctified water.

After other prayers and the usual dismissal, the water which remained in the tureen was distributed among the worshippers, every one of whom tried to obtain and carry away a little of the sacred treasure, either in a little vessel or by dipping a pocket-handkerchief or mantle in it.

The procession then reformed, returned to the church and dispersed.

## CHAPTER XIV

### PRIVATE WALKS AND TALKS IN KORSAKOFFSK

BESIDES the hospital there were several spots which came to be favourite haunts with me. There were the homes of the Japanese consul, the priest, my merry laundress, the château of the princes, the Rifle Butts, the blacksmith's shop, or the walk along the beach, where, towards evening, I would be sure to come across one or more of the better class of exiles.

Under the Japanese treaty by which Sakhalin was ceded to Russia, one of the clauses provided for a Japanese consulate at Korsakoffsk, whose business should be to receive and transmit the payment to be made annually by Russia for a certain number of years, and to supervise the fishing industry the Japanese were allowed to maintain along the southern and southwestern coast for a corresponding period, under conditions mutually agreed upon.

Beyond this, and looking after the fishing crews which were so apt to get wrecked on this

## Walks and Talks in Korsakoffsk

most dangerous coast, the duties of the consul amounted to nothing, and as he had a very competent assistant to help him, a visit from a friend formed a grateful break in the monotony of his existence.

The consul was a cultured, charming, and most hospitable man, but, excepting the Governor and myself, I never knew anybody to call at his house, nor did I ever see him outside of it. Whether this be attributable to the Budhistic training, I will not venture to guess, but I think that all competent judges will agree that, while there are few peoples more gregarious and social than the Japanese, there is none more capable of cheerful self-containment. My good friend, who was such an excellent instance in point, generously allowed me to practise my doubtful Japanese upon him, and in all ways he was a better friend to me than it was in my power to be to him.

There was a merry laundress, one of the only three women in Korsakoffsk in whose faces seemed possible any expression of brightness, cheerfulness, or contentment. Her cottage, both outside and inside, was as bright as she was herself, and, though our conversation was never learned or profound, it was a pleasure to pass a few minutes in exchanging salutations with her. I understand that she had volunta-

## Prisoners of Russia

rily exiled herself to join her husband, who worked in the prison. Be that as it may, a more bright and contented creature could hardly be found anywhere.

A favourite stroll which I frequently took was to the left of the Japanese consul's house along the beach. There, under a precipitous and overhanging cliff on an elevated plateau projecting almost into the sea, were a little house and water-mill, as picturesque as could be designed. This house had been built and till recently had been occupied by the two princes of whom I have already spoken. From the top of the cliff ran a perpetual stream of considerable volume—an exact counterpart on a smaller scale of the famous water-fall of Geisbach in Switzerland. The princes had constructed an overshot water-wheel, upon which this stream played, and considerable grist was brought to their mill in more ways than one. By a variety of fantastic ornamentation of the house, and the rocky plateau in front, the spot had quite an ideal appearance as an exile home. On account of some reckless and unsuccessful attempt to escape, however, the princes had been ordered back to the prison, where, in comfortable but less romantic quarters, I had the interview with one of them which I have elsewhere described. At the time of my visit the house was occupied

## Walks and Talks in Korsakoffsk

by another exile, who had none of their culture and taste, and who seemed to have very little appreciation of the beauties of his situation.

A village smithy has always had strong attractions for me. The blacksmith's shop at Korsakoffsk, however, lacked some of the accustomed poetic elements. Apart from the horse-shoeing, a large share of the work consisted in the repairing of fetters, a number of which always lay scattered about the floor. The merry whistle which in western countries is such a usual accompaniment of the anvil stroke is here unknown.

My favourite pastime was joining in the practice at the Rifle Butts. In the evening a stroll along the beach to the right frequently brought me across an exile for whom I felt a good deal of respect and sympathy. As regularly as if he were a Parsee or a Mohammedan, this man was to be found there watching the setting of the sun from the best point of view on the sands. He was a very large and really magnificent looking man, with a superb head. His face, kind though sad, had a manner in which dignity and gentleness were charmingly combined. This superb, gentle man had formerly for a long time held a most distinguished position in the artistic world of St. Petersburg.

As he nightly paced that lonely beach, cap in

## Prisoners of Russia

hand, the rays of the setting sun falling full on his solitary figure, the sight was to my mind particularly picturesque. Not only did he suffer intense remorse for the murder he had committed, but he was haunted with the idea that everybody knew of his crime. By nature very sensitive, he had become so shy, that, though he was delighted to meet somebody who was neither a convict nor an official, it was only by the most delicate approaches that I at last succeeded in securing his confidence.

His crime had been wholly unpremeditated, but had been committed so publicly that there had been no discretionary power that the court could exercise short of exile. Further, such was his popularity, that if he had been sent only to continental Siberia, his friends would certainly have contrived his escape; so he was deported direct to Sakhalin.

The consideration he received from all the officials was so great and uniform that he was practically free, and was allowed to use his private resources sufficiently to live in comfort.

Further remarks on this interesting friend I will reserve for my observations on the remorse of murderers.

The priest's house was a favourite resort of mine also. This was partly from my special fondness for him, partly because of his anxiety

## Walks and Talks in Korsakoffsk

to become acquainted with the parallelisms in the English and Greek liturgies; also because of the pleasure he took in giving me information on the many points in the exile and social life with which he had a more intimate acquaintance than any other person in Korsakoffsk.

His house was large, rambling, bare, and barn-like, and wholly destitute of what might be called comfort. Excepting his eldest daughter, the pretty and favourite Eugenie, the family, for reasons domestic, were rarely to be seen except on festive occasions. Our interviews were always in what the priest euphemistically called his "study." This was a little corner room, in which there were three old chairs, a kitchen-table on which he was usually writing official reports, and a very simple cot bed, on which he slept. The prison cell of the exile prince I have mentioned was vastly more comfortable by comparison. Whatever may be said about extortionate priests, the good Timoskenk evidently did not belong to that class. Indeed, in view of his native refinement and delicate tastes, his manifest poverty was painful to witness. Never but twice did I see him in the street, and, if he were not at the church, I was always sure of his being at home. He took great pleasure in comparing his local observations with my own respecting the characters of especially notorious

## Prisoners of Russia

criminals. Though his chief interest centred in his church, he was wholly free from the mysteriousness behind which priests less competent than himself are so apt habitually to shelter themselves and their ignorance.

He professed great pride and satisfaction in being a priest in what for many reasons he regarded as the only true Church, certainly the most ancient Christian Church, and one the clearly historic continuity of which is almost without parallel. The Roman Catholic Church he regarded as a dissenting body, the English Church as a new schismatic and heretical off-shoot of the dissenting Romanists. His poverty he was not ashamed of; on the contrary, like some bishops and other priests of the same Church whom I have known, he considered that, whatever the professions of a Christian priest might be, it was an imperative duty that the manner and style of his living should, as nearly as practicable, be like that of his divine Master, not a contradiction of it, that thus alone could he hope to succeed in impressing the hearts of the poor with the Gospel and with his own sincerity as a preacher, and that for the sake of the poor he must not be, or appear to be, above them in these respects, but as one of them, that they might feel as much at home with him as children feel with a true "papa" or father.

## Walks and Talks in Korsakoffsk

"Living as they see me live," he said, "my people do not doubt that our experiences are in common. That when I say to them, 'Blessed are the poor,' my words are not ironical; that in all things temporal as well as spiritual they and myself are in real sympathy. It is in this," he concluded, "that lies, I think, the human secret of spiritual influence and success, especially that of a priest with his people."

There was nothing in this which surprised me, for I had been forced to infer from the very beginning of my acquaintance with him that these were his controlling sentiments.

The beautiful character of this man and the privilege of his friendship I have never ceased to look back upon with warm appreciation and with gratitude.

In keeping with the habitual informality of what we will call Korsakoffsk society, my hostess said to me, one morning about noon, in her excellent English, "Misterr Howardt, dinner we will perhaps not haf zis day; I zink we will go to ze house off ze priest."

Thither, about two o'clock, madame, the Governor, and myself accordingly went. On entering the large, bare, and barn-like reception-room, where the whole colony was already assembled, we were received, not by the priest, nor by his wife, but by a little fellow about five

## Prisoners of Russia

years old, who was gorgeously bedecked for the occasion, and whom, I found, everybody was expected to kiss on arriving. This little fellow was the only son of the priest, and this his "name day," which we were assembled to celebrate, he being the nominal host, we his guests.

Besides the other children, including the pretty and popular Eugenie I have already mentioned, this house was the home of the most popular baby, called the "baby-organ."

With the exception of the Governor's piano, it was the only musical (?) instrument in the settlement. It was about the size of a sewing machine, hence portable. Wherever and whenever there was a party, there went the barrel organ. For dancing it was indispensable.

This ugly little creature was a home-made product, the proud achievement of a convict carpenter in the prison. Its repertoire was very limited, and the few airs it yielded were determined by perforated slips of brown paper put in its inside. When the creaky wooden handle was turned, it stirred up rats, cats, and puppies.

To stimulate conversation and beguile the few minutes of customary delay, Eugenie good-naturedly began the usual performance on this miniature menagerie, but fortunately had only made a few turns when came the glad announcement of dinner.

## Walks and Talks in Korsakoffsk

We had a tight fit of it at the table, in the centre of which was placed little Ivan Alexandrovitch, who, poor little fellow! seemed somewhat dazed and bewildered by the proceedings. The good priest said grace, everybody made the significant and convenient cross sign, and then, all standing, we drank in vodka the health of little Ivan.

After *hors d'œuvres* innumerable, soup and the inevitable fish and potato pie, we began our dinner. When the time came another toast was drunk to Ivan, and such of the gentlemen as felt able went away to their respective duties. The ladies remained to drink tea, smoke, and kiss and re-kiss the patient little host, to gossip, of course, and to further enjoy the music which was ground out by the children.

It must not be supposed that the festival was now at an end. In the celebration of a "name day," which is also a celebration in hom-age of the patron saint of the host or hostess of the occasion, the guests are all literally boarders in the house for the whole of that day. About six or seven o'clock all the guests who had left after dinner came back again, and, as some of them had taken but little to eat since four o'clock that afternoon, the seven o'clock dinner was entered upon with considerable zest.

By about eleven o'clock the tide of hilarity

## Prisoners of Russia

rose nearly to its highest water (?) mark, and as neither the priest nor myself danced, we adjourned to his "study" for a private smoke.

Although the keeping of a name day is a religious as well as a social event, it cannot be said that even in the house of the priest the religious part of it was at all conspicuous. As every member of a family, however large, has a name day every year, the frequency of the festival must kindle a great many associations to offset the rough discomforts and monotony of every-day life.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE HOSPITAL

THE hospital of Korsakoffsk is a fairly good building. On the left of the main entrance are the female wards; to its right, the outdoor medical department and pharmacy; and from this at right angles extends a long right wing, divided into several male wards. Other wards and some outbuildings form the left wing, which runs along the ridge of a precipitous hill, while a log palisade in the rear completes the quadrangle area the hospital occupies. The male wards, which would accommodate about sixty patients, generally contained about thirty-five. The female wards, with capacity for about twenty, generally contained about ten.

Some of these wards were single, for obstetric and operative cases, and others had but four beds each. The situation of the building was perfect. The condition of the wards, from a Russian standpoint, would be regarded as decidedly clean, but the latrines were execrable, be-

## Prisoners of Russia

ing fully up to the odorous standard so dear to these people.

Each cot had its card for temperature and pulse registrations, and the general conduct of affairs corresponded to European methods.

The male wards had male nurses, the female had female nurses, all convicts, previously untrained, and therefore by no means models in their accidental vocation. The hospital steward, however, I have rarely seen surpassed for general efficiency in any army hospital anywhere.

The post surgeon, Dr. A——, visited all the indoor patients twice a day, and attended in the outdoor department during the morning.

In the front hall were always posted two soldiers; but beyond that, and the iron bars outside the numerous windows, there was nothing to suggest penal conditions.

The pharmacy was well stocked in quantity, but, fortunately perhaps, the variety of the supplies was not enough to tempt an enthusiastic experimenter. Within the regulation list the quantities were without limit. The diet supplied was according to the doctor's daily requisition list in each case, and in the ordering of this he was under no arbitrary restrictions.

The diseases of which I saw the most in the hospital were bronchitis, rheumatism, and pneu-

## The Hospital

monia, much as would be found in any hospital in a northern latitude, and I saw also some cases of malaria. These patients were chiefly in the outdoor department, and had been working on virgin land in the neighbourhood. The surgical patients were, naturally, few.

Dr. A—— told me that he had not the exact statistics to give me, but from all he knew, he thought that the death-rate of the entire island was *pro rata* as low as in any part of the world, and that there was no single disease which he could designate as endemic, or particularly prevalent.

I had suspected that I might unearth a considerable proportion of cases of raving madness. But there is not a single lunatic asylum on the entire island. All through Siberia special provision for the insane is quite neglected. As the insane of Korsakoffsk were, therefore, inmates of the hospital, I unavoidably saw all there were without trouble. Among these few there was no violent patient. There were two epileptics of feeble intellect, and also two patients more or less imbecile, who had been in the hospital continuously for several years in the absence of other provision for them. Except these, there were no patients of this class. It was in this hospital that I followed up the treatment of the murderer whom I saw receive a hundred lashes

## Prisoners of Russia

with the knout. It was also in one of the female wards that occurred my first encounter with an aboriginal Aino—an incident which led to the experience recounted in my book on Life with Trans-Siberian Savages.

While, on the one hand, Dr. A—— professed that the hospital was greatly indebted to me, I, on the other hand, declared that I was much more indebted to it, there being no other spot on the island where I could so well and deeply have studied the pathology of the exile system as here, whither came everything which most deeply testified against it. On the slightest excuse every exile and convict claims his right of seeing the doctor, and it is impossible, therefore, for any cruelty or abuse of any kind whatsoever to continue long in operation without some evidence of it coming under the eye of the physician.

Every wound, however slight, whether from flogging, blows, manacles, or accident; every illness or physical deterioration, whether from actual disease, bad or insufficient diet, malaria, insanitary conditions, or obscene habits, all come under his observation. It is upon him, too, that falls the unpleasant duty of detecting and circumventing the ingenious artfulness of the many malingerers.

Thus the doctor has his finger literally on



Convicts in hospital.



## The Hospital

the pulse of the physical and moral life of the whole settlement all the time.

It would be too flattering to say that this hospital was my observatory. It was my clinical and pathological laboratory. Every morning all the prisoners who claimed exemption from work on account of physical disability were marched down to the outdoor department. This squad usually included some of the most incorrigible, the most depraved, and also the cleverest of the prisoners, men who by long study and practice had become thoroughly accomplished in the arts of the moulderer. The aim of these men was to practise on the doctor, and to take care that he did not practise on them.

One of these men was for several weeks led to the hospital every other day, bent as nearly double as a half-shut clasp-knife, gasping, groaning, or shrieking almost incessantly. His disease, as marked on his ticket, was lumbago, the symptoms of which he knew to perfection. As in this disease the symptoms are wholly subjective, Dr. A—, though he could discover no other proof of its existence, had taken the patient's word, and had properly ordered warmth, rest, and special diet—exactly what the rascal wanted. Having had a good deal of experience with new recruits and with soldiers

## Prisoners of Russia

on the eve of battle, I perceived in this man what to my mind was a ground for suspicion. At my instigation, the doctor arranged for a close watch upon his movements, informing the patient at the same time that, unless his disease took a favourable turn within a day or two, he should have to apply two large blisters to the affected part.

The second night thereafter, during the excitement of a game of cards, the watchers noticed that the patient quite forgot the lumbago part of his rôle, and that his movements became as alert as possible. The next morning, when he appeared at the hospital rather worse than usual, the doctor confronted him with the proofs of his malingering. Without a murmur he went straight back to his work.

There was one healthy prisoner there, who was naturally cadaverous looking, and knew how much his appearance favoured his game. I have several times heard the stage cough of the famous Rachel when she was in the later stage of phthisis, but the cough of this man beat it. It sounded like a veritable reverberation from the tomb.

As I passed through the waiting-room I noticed the guard in attendance looking almost in terror at several little pools of blood this patient had unavoidably expectorated on the floor

## The Hospital

right in front of the startled soldier. Indeed, so moved was the guard at the sight that, in simple compassion, he came forward to ask the doctor if he might not take the patient at once into one of the regular wards for permanent treatment. Both Dr. A—— and myself examined this patient's chest and, rather to our surprise, found his lungs as strong as a blacksmith's bellows, and his heart perfect.

Considerably perplexed, it occurred to one of us then to examine carefully his throat and mouth. Here we found a back gum looking like a ploughed field. I happened to notice, too, that the dirt under this patient's forefinger-nail was more red than black. These two things put together proved to be a complete explanation of the startling haemoptysis which this sickly looking but really healthy man was in the habit of producing at a minute's notice on suitable occasions.

In nearly every case this kind of applicant for the hospital, called the "prisoner's paradise," would be one who was the wearer of chains as special punishment for attempted escape or other crimes.

Here is another instance. Very early one morning Dr. A—— was hurried out of bed to attend a prisoner who on his way to quarry and road-work had fallen down in a fit. This man

## Prisoners of Russia

was so utterly unmanageable that, in addition to leg-chains, which are an exceptional penalty, a long chain ran from his waist to the wheel-barrow which he used, to increase the difficulty of the escape he always seemed to be contemplating.

On arriving at the hospital, Dr. A—— found that this patient had already been released from his manacles and was installed in a separate ward, but still continued in violent convulsions. He had no suspicions in this case, for, in addition to ordinary spasmodic convulsions, there were the bitten tongue and the foaming at the mouth, the absence of which so often betray the amateurs. I suggested to Dr. A—— an emetic under another name, and he gave it. Among other things this brought to light was a substance which never enters into the prisoners' diet, but which, concealed in the cheek, will produce excellent foaming. It was a piece of soap. The foaming, and the bitten tongue, were known to this clever fellow as the accepted signs of true epilepsy. The surprise and confusion of the artful but outwitted patient at this revelation in the unexpected resurrection of what he had inadvertently swallowed was serio-comic in the extreme. Dr. A——, who always seemed to look upon his patients rather as unfortunate children, did not for a moment up-

## The Hospital

braid or accuse this man who had so cleverly practised on him, but simply held up this piece of soap on a skewer, and gave the rascal a forgiving but significant smile. The chop-fallen malingerer became quite impatient to get away from the scene of his almost successful exploit.

Self-mutilation I have heard of, but I was unable to find an instance of it in Sakhalin. A pretty effective check upon this is the knowledge every prisoner has that after a period, which, if he likes, he can make a short one, any disability thus caused will be a substantial and permanent disadvantage to himself by crippling his ability for independent self-maintenance. Such mutilations as have occurred, I was told, were not of the right forefinger, as I have seen so often in the army, but of the right thumb, chiefly to destroy competence for handling any labour implement.

The illustrative cases of malingering I have given may be taken as specimens of a great variety of practices which are a constant perplexity to the prison surgeon, who, while wishing on the one hand perhaps to be just to the prisoners, is on the other hand compelled to do his duty to the Administration which employs him.

It is not only the art of the malingerer against which the doctor has to be on the alert. The former medical officer had an experience

## Prisoners of Russia

which he told me had caused him a good deal of perplexity and anxiety. A disease broke out in the prison to which he found it very difficult to give either a name or a place on the printed forms of the weekly medical report. One prisoner after another had begun to complain, until within two days about twenty of them were suffering acutely, while three or four of them later on came near dying. The doctor was struck by the fact that each of the cases was from the same kamera, and that no similar symptoms had appeared in any other parts of the prison. Still more was he impressed with the fact that one prisoner, and only one, in the kamera concerned remained completely well.

The pretty little flower of the *Aconitum Napellus* grows in great profusion in Sakhalin, where I have seen patches of it as thick as buttercups or daisies are in some other countries.

I need hardly say that aconite is not only a most deadly poison, but that its presence in the human body is almost beyond the range of detection even by an expert toxicologist, as was shown a few years ago in a famous trial of which a small slab in the murderers' row in Wardsworth prison is now the principal monument.

The healthy prisoner, it seems, had suspected some of his mates of conspiring to cheat him

## The Hospital

in their usual card-play. Being acquainted with the nature of this plant, which was found in profusion in the vicinity where he worked, he secured sufficient for his purpose, and with this managed to adulterate the soup of his particular squad.

I was told that, as one after another complained of thirst and griping, he won their gratitude by heating over again for them the unused portion of soup in the bottom of the kettle, and being conspicuously kind and attentive in administering the remainder for their relief. This was but one of the many incidents in which I found that prisoners often had more to fear from each other than from the officers in immediate charge of them.

Respecting the indoor patients, they had, ironically speaking, great "staying power." Literally they were very defective in recuperative force. In the latter respect their condition closely resembled what I have observed among patients who are prisoners of war, with whom any serious disease is sure to be more fatal than with soldiers of the conquering army in the same hospital.

For this low state of vital resiliency or tone there were many causes, one or more predominating in different individuals, but in all cases it might be best summed up perhaps in the word

## Prisoners of Russia

apathy. It is not a difficult matter for almost any serious disease to prove fatal, where the patient sees no reasons why he should wish to recover.

Another cause of illness prevalent here, as among prisoners everywhere, and one which is everywhere beyond external control, is unnatural vice, especially in the solitary form. Against the latter the best-conducted European or American prisons on the separate system have no remedy. The congregate or herding system practised throughout Siberia, however, is said to be more woefully prolific of unnatural mutual vices, practised with gross shamelessness.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE PHYSIOGNOMY OF MURDERERS—REMORSE

I HAVE profound respect for the skill of my friends Professor Benedict, of Vienna University, and Professor Lombroso, of Turin, in their studies of the craniology and physiognomy of murderers and other criminals. When sufficient data shall have been correctly classified, the value of their conclusions will turn on the precision with which criminal peculiarities may be perceived before conviction, and upon the degree to which the instructors of youth especially may thus become able to discriminate the erratic tendencies of the individual pupil, and to correct them by training.

In the midst of such boundless material as I had in Korsakoffsk, I was anxious to make craniological measurements, and thus to add to the data already possessed, but I found that the objections to it were so great as to be insurmountable. To read Russian physiognomy with probable accuracy, I am convinced that the expert himself should be a Russian. The *re-*

## Prisoners of Russia.

*troussé* or pug nose, the high cheek-bones, small, piggish eyes, large mouth, heavy lower jaw, large projecting ears, and receding forehead, are features which are common to the larger proportion of the lower classes in Russia, whether criminal or virtuous. Criminologists generally agree as to the predominance of dark hair in murderers. Among the Korsakoffsk murderers dark hair was quite an exception. To a foreigner there would at first seem to be great similarity of feature; to one closer acquainted, however, the expressions were as varied and as significant as would be found among the same class in other countries.

The "mark of Cain," which everybody is so clever at perceiving in the countenance of every murderer after his conviction, my experience taught me to regard as something of a fallacy. Among convicts sent to Sakhalin for a single murder, I found many examples of exceptionally fine features, thoroughly good expression, faces without a sign but such as would commend the individuals to the liking and confidence of strangers.

Among those whom I ascertained to have been guilty of more than one murder, and especially among men who had been little short of habitual or professional assassins, I certainly found that contrary conditions prevailed. After

## The Physiognomy of Murderers

very numerous comparisons I was still unable to discover any single "mark" which the public so easily perceive in convicted murderers. The more common expression among these multiple assassins was one of dull, general antagonism. I think that an average person might be confronted with several groups of these men, and, if he knew nothing of them, he would hardly venture to pick out one as being constitutionally a murderer.

On the other hand, if he were an expert, it would be easy for him to perceive in a large proportion a sign or signs of some one dominant passion or weakness. In by far the larger number of instances, certainly, this predominant expression was that of greed. In some cases this would be united with one of fearless daring not altogether unattractive. The murders committed by these men had oftenest been incident to highway robbery or burglary. In the larger number of the cases in which the crime of murder had been incident to stealing, however, I was rather surprised to find how commonly this primary expression of greed was, as with wild animals, combined with one of positive timidity.

These men were generally of poor physique, undersized, pale of complexion, having a manner and appearance which in the fox and the wolf are called shyness, but which, when seen

# Prisoners of Russia

in a man, secure for him the appellation of "sneak."

After prolonged observation of these unfortunately constructed individuals, I became aware that I had been unconsciously classing the lower types of them according to the species of animals they respectively suggested, the nature of which seemed to survive prominently in their expression.

## ATTRACTIVE-LOOKING MURDERERS

In the administration of the many and diverse departments of the penal colony of Sakhalin it may be inferred that the number of subordinate clerks and other office employees must be a large one. Accordingly all these posts are filled by selections made from the exiles and convicts themselves. Many of these posts have to be confidential, and carry with them considerable responsibility. The selections for them have to be made with even more care than would be necessary in ordinary life.

Whenever I strolled into the offices of the savings bank, or the agricultural department, it was with a very lively though not visible interest that I scanned the faces of the many clerks at their desks, and of the messengers and other persons employed.

Besides special rations and money grants,

## The Physiognomy of Murderers

another privilege, and the one most prized by these persons perhaps, was that of dressing in any way they liked best.

Among the many mercantile establishments in St. Petersburg and Moscow with which I am familiar, I remember very few in which the employees presented a better appearance in any way than the clerks in Korsakoffsk. In apparent intelligence, morality, smartness of manner, they were about up to the average; in certain compulsory virtues they were altogether superior. I was assured that for the most part they had fully justified their selection.

What struck me most, and what may be equally surprising to others, was that some of the best of these men had committed the murders which were the most notoriously frightful. The artist I have mentioned; the hospital steward of whom I have spoken so highly; the Governor's coachman, for instance, appeared to be admirable men, yet, curiously enough, each of these belonged in this category.

The principal cause of their crimes, I found, had been jealousy, sudden rage, intoxication, revenge, or some other passing passion. Far be it from me to palliate the heinousness of their crimes, but it was most manifest that these murderers were not entirely the all-round, through and through corrupt individuals who,

# Prisoners of Russia

according to the popular imagination, must necessarily be and are unfit to live.

From a close personal acquaintance I am convinced that many of these men would have scorned the thought of the commercial frauds by which some respectable men I know have obtained position and influence. In some of the cases the crime was the outcome of circumstances and coincidences as unlikely to recur as is a thunderbolt to strike a second time just in the same spot. While moving daily among these men, I think, it never once occurred to me to regret that any one of them had not been hanged.

## THE REMORSE OF MURDERERS

From the constitution of the human mind, the remorse from murder is so distinctive, so intense, so inevitable, that, even though the crime be undiscovered, there is no escape from the punishment.

This is one of the common beliefs of mankind, and for a long time I accepted it as true in all cases. But let the reader reflect on the origin of this belief in himself, and he will find himself turning to books—to books of a class not one of which pretends to be scientific.

In other countries the statements of murderers are liable to be warped by many considera-

## The Remorse of Murderers

tions; in Sakhalin there is no such word as hope. Let the confession be what it may, there is nothing left to fear: Sakhalin is the place of the dead; the world has long become but a distant recollection. The state of the individual is unalterably fixed; there are no motives. There is nothing to warp the testimony of the lost about themselves. My visits might be as private as I chose and as long as I chose. They might be made at night as well as by day, in company or alone, and in absolute confidence.

Writing to a friend at this time, I said: "I feel that this is Inferno; I am Dante, and that my investigations might be called 'Studies in Hell.' "

I began with the objective symptoms as they might be revealed when the individuals were in bed at night, and entirely off their guard. For this kind of observation my intimate relationship with the hospital was of indispensable service to me. In these observations I found that the more degraded of the criminals, those who had committed the larger number of crimes, the habitual, the constitutional murderers, slept just as well as innocent people would sleep. It was the same with their eating and drinking—life with them being as nearly as possible simply an animal existence.

Those who had committed but one murder

## Prisoners of Russia

were, on the contrary, very apt to be victims of insomnia, in proportion to their higher state of culture.

All such were at all times what we call "light sleepers." On going to bed they would drop off into a sleep as readily as others, but they would be easily awakened out of it, the early waking being almost always accompanied by a start. The superficial character of their sleep would be apparent by restlessness, tossing, moaning, perhaps talking; their own talking would itself sometimes wake them. A common time for waking was about two, still more so about three o'clock. It interested me very much to note the comparative uniformity in the time of the first definite waking in each case. Clocks and watches were very few in Korsakoffsk, but if a watch had run down it might have been set by the waking of any one of these patients. About five they would fall asleep again perhaps, but at the getting-up time would rise comparatively unrefreshed.

These same persons were generally light eaters also, and had a pulse which was both small and weak. In contrast to the dogged apathy so prevalent, the individuals of whom I am now speaking appeared to be painfully sensitive, and their manner was distressingly shy. There was a very cultivated man in the hos-

## The Remorse of Murderers

pital, for a sprained ankle, who had been sent to the island for forgery. Incident to this forgery had occurred a mysterious death in which this man was supposed to have been concerned, but, as the evidence was insufficient on this point, he was neither convicted nor tried on that charge. With the consideration so frequently extended to the more refined and educated prisoners, the doctor had given this man a two-bed ward to himself. On one of my watch-nights the night-nurse was awakened from a light doze by a muttering dream of this man. The attendant was watching him in the uncertain glimmering lamp-light. Evidently still asleep, but with eyes wide open, this patient sprang up in his bed and, with his hands clasped, talked to an imaginary papa or priest, unburdening his mind as if in confession. Curiously enough, while admitting that it was he alone who had committed the murder, his principal concern seemed to be to correct a false impression which had prevailed on an important detail as to the hour at which it was done. With a deep moan, as if exhausted, he then fell back on his pillow. The attendant kept as still as death, fearing that the poor wretch might fully awaken, discover his presence, and suspect his having heard his words. His confession was so detailed and circumstantial that it certainly might have supplied all the

## Prisoners of Russia

points in the evidence which had been wanting against him.

The soundest sleeper in the entire hospital was the obtuse, hardened, and incorrigible thief whose flogging for a local murder I have elsewhere described. My clinical notes of this kind would of themselves fill a small volume. I am compelled to restrict myself in these pages chiefly to the conclusions I drew from them.

Putting together the facts I obtained from criminals themselves with those received at second-hand from the priest, and from other officials closely associated with the prisoners, my impression was that in the case of the lower type of these murderers very few of their earlier crimes would have been committed at all, but for the notion of the criminal that he would probably escape detection, and still more probably conviction and punishment.

The criminals of this type all suffered more or less acutely, but this was from the subsequent incessant nervous apprehension about possible detection and arrest. After the arrest there had been suffering of a milder type, this being concerning the impending trial and sentence, but after the sentence had come, first, a comparative relief due to the change from uncertainty to certainty, and then gradual subsidence into apa-

## The Remorse of Murderers

thetic submission to the daily routine of prison regulations.

I also concluded that there was in all this no sense of acquiescence as to deserts or the justice of the punishment, that such little thought or feeling as continued resolved itself into chagrin at the mistake and mismanagement in not securing immunity. For a short time, too, there had been a resentment towards those in immediate charge over them. But from first to last a feeling of sorrow for the individual murdered, a sense of sin in the crime, of penitence for it, the feeling of remorse as we commonly understand it, is to many of them quite unknown.

With men of this low type, between the thing wanted and the impulse to seize it, moral restraint is almost an unknown quantity. As with beasts of prey, the only obstacle is fear. With such men death is but little dreaded, but in the presence of prospect of physical suffering they are invariably great cowards. No better instance of this could be seen than is invariably witnessed in the knout-flogging cases. As I came to have more and more experience with these people, the less did I think that moral obtuseness was confined exclusively to those of the greatest mental dulness. Among the very few exceptions to the stupid faces of female con-

## Prisoners of Russia

victims, for example, was the woman who at the time of my pleasant chat with her in her own house had just thrown the fragments of her paramour to the wolves in the adjoining forest. It is difficult to associate the idea of compunction with such quickness, brightness, and vivacity as she displayed directly after this crime.

Take, again, "*la belle femme.*" I admit that she had no more cultivation than the average woman in the Caucasian mountains whence she came, yet for natural quickness and hilarity she was said to be without an equal in Sakhalin. In her jealous caprices, however, she was simply a tigress, and thought that an additional murder rather added to her prestige and fascination, and I think it did. The Shakespearian "damned spots" on her hands no more troubled the vision of this woman than they would trouble that of a French editor or statesman after killing his antagonist in a duel. For pure recklessness and wantonness in killing, these women surpassed any men I ever saw or heard of. Apart from natural reasons pertaining to sex, it seemed to me that this resulted in part from the imperiousness of their inordinate vanity and sensuous love of power, and in part from their consciousness of the immunity granted to them on account of their sex alone.

I come now to the murderers whom I knew

## The Remorse of Murderers

very well in Korsakoffsk. They were of a totally different and higher type. Among them were two *bona fide* princes of culture, and the distinguished artist who had moved in very high circles in Russia, and of each I retain interesting souvenirs. There were also several others who held subordinate offices in or about the various bureaus of the Administration.

Each of the men I have in mind had committed but a single murder, and each murder had been committed almost before the criminal knew it. Nobody was more astonished by the crime than the murderer himself. As I have already remarked, the crimes in these cases were the outcome of a sudden access of jealousy, of rage, of revenge. In two other cases they were due to intoxication. I ascertained that immediately after the crime some of these murderers had been as if stunned, lost in confusion and almost apathetic in their sense of helplessness. Others had been seized with a frenzy of fright, and had become frantic in their grief over the person murdered. The dread of detection and arrest, the idea of escape had not been at all uppermost, and such efforts as had been made to this end, had been so confused and bungling as to increase the evidence against them. Their arrest had given them a positive sense of relief. During their formal trial their sense of humili-

## Prisoners of Russia

ation and shame, which was uppermost, robbed them of any possible ingenuity in their plan of defence, and they were not painfully anxious about the exact nature of the impending verdict.

After the verdict, when the excitement of the legal procedures was passed, and they had settled down to their doom and fixed condition, a new and more regular form of insomnia set in. The sin in their crime bit back excruciatingly in these post-midnight waking hours. The days they could stand, but the nights they dreaded. The hard-labour part of their sentence, which in most of these cases was not strictly carried out, though irksome, was regarded as the most merciful part of their lot. It afforded distraction by day and procured sleep, which bridged over the racking tortures of the night. In some cases grief over the death of their victim was the acutest element in their night agony.

In consequence of this mental suffering, most of these persons looked from five to ten or even fifteen years older than they really were.

In ordinary life, our dead, even those who have been part of ourselves, cease, after a few years, to be always in our minds. So, in all cases, the victim of the murder, except on rare and startling occasions, is gradually forgotten by the murderer, and the fang of remorse is

## The Remorse of Murderers

worn down. The sense of shame and humiliation, however, persists, and this engenders a peculiar manner which becomes a second nature in such persons. A boisterous manner I never saw in one of them. If it ever naturally existed, it became after the murder wholly subdued. They talk little except to themselves, which they do very frequently when they think themselves beyond observation. During their solitary walks the motions of their lips are commonly visible at a distance. This muttering to themselves when they think themselves unobserved is frequently interspersed with violent ejaculations and gesticulations. Whenever they do speak to another person, the voice is raised only just enough to be heard. I am not sure that they cannot laugh, but I never saw one of them laugh. In conversation many of them had a smile, which was very courteous, very apologetic, very pleasing; but the smile is as the shore-lapping of a deep quiet sea after the subsidence of a great storm.

Unlike the political exile, whose conscience forces him to make his conduct and manner towards the officials, and especially the subordinate ones, a perpetual protest; unlike the lower type of assassin with his blind, surly, and abject obedience, the type of murderer of which I am speaking is docile to warders, self-respecting

## Prisoners of Russia

and respectful, and belongs to the class which, as officials say, "give no trouble." For this reason they are generally popular, so to speak, with the subordinate officials. The higher officials, who are very quick at recognising a gentleman, and are sure to learn their history, are apt to treat them with leniency at first and a good deal of consideration afterward. The artist, the princes, the hospital steward I have mentioned, also various clerks in the departments, and others within certain limitations, were as free in Korsakoffsk as if they had never committed any crime at all. The manners of the murderers of this type are best illustrated by those of some monastics—subdued, gentle, suave; a manifest *arrière pensée* suggesting the perpetual consciousness of being "under discipline." I got the impression that after the remorse had more or less died away the shame and humiliation immediately following the murder still survived, and would persist perhaps to the end. These peculiarities of manner, one can easily imagine, might have been observable in King David after his murder of Uriah, while qualifying for the writing of his best penitential Psalms.

While I would hardly go so far as Thackeray, who speaks of remorse as the least active, the most easily quenched of all the moral senses,

## The Remorse of Murderers

one which in some natures is naturally dormant or non-existent, it is decidedly my impression that the popular notion and teaching respecting the inevitable and special remorse of murderers is one of many popular errors. My extended observation has convinced me of what to some may seem a strange fact, that the remorse of a murderer is not in proportion to his guilt, but is rather the measure of his greater or lesser moral sensibility.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE QUESTION OF REFORMATION

I THINK I never met with a jailer anywhere who was an ardent believer in the reformation of criminals of any kind. On the other hand, I have rarely known one of these men who had made any personal effort to test the soundness of his unbelief. They recognise that not the crime but the imprisonment for it is the more difficult obstacle to reformation to be surmounted. The greatest sceptics of all regarding the reformation of prisoners may perhaps be found among the prisoners themselves, especially in such prisons of America and western Europe as have a resident chaplain. The universal dictum of prisoners respecting each other in their relation to the chaplain is, that the best of them are thought the worst, and the worst the best, by that official.. In Russian prisons there is no temptation to duplicity of this nature, however, for in not one of them throughout the Empire is the chaplain an official of a penal institution or prison, in the Anglican sense.

## The Question of Reformation

In sad contrast to more civilized countries Russia makes no pretence to educate prisoners, or to reform them. She puts no positive obstacle in their way in either direction, however.

On the contrary, the books and the agents of the British and Foreign Bible Society of England have for a long time enjoyed privileges throughout the Russian dominions not accorded to them even in England itself. These agents may travel and take or send their books free of charge to the most distant prison in Siberia, and in these prisons the agents are encouraged and helped by the officials in the distribution to the prisoners of the Society's publications. Sakhalin, however, may be said to be beyond the sphere of these influences.

Voluntary schools for the children of exiles and prisoners, some of them of a high order, are also allowed and encouraged in most of the principal towns of Siberia. The office of schoolmaster for prisoners, and of chaplain for prisoners exclusively, however, has never been instituted. The Government generally arranges that an orthodox priest shall be within reach of prisoners as of others, but within the prison walls no clergyman has distinctive official position or responsibility.

Although I believe that the separate and

## Prisoners of Russia

silent prison system, such as prevails in Europe and America, would be the most intolerable of all forms of continuous punishment to the average Russian criminal, I am obliged to admit that the herding system as practised in Sakhalin and throughout Siberia, during the imprisonment period of exile, is so thoroughly demoralizing that even the strongest characters can hardly be expected to survive it without damage.

To mitigate or counteract this condition of things the Administration does absolutely nothing, the morals of the prisoners being understood to be entirely beyond its sphere.

I asked my good friend the priest, whose house is but a few yards from the prison, how many times in each week he made regular visits to the prisoners in it. In view of his exceptional devotion to his ordinary clerical duties, and of his sweetly sympathetic character, I was surprised and not a little shocked when he told me that he never entered the prison except when he was sent for by a prisoner. In such a case, however, he was very glad to do whatever lay in his power.

"Are any of the prisoners ever allowed to come from the prison to the Korsakoffsk church?"

"Never."

## The Question of Reformation

"Is any sort of reading matter supplied within the prison?"

"Alas! have you seen anything of that sort anywhere in Korsakoffsk?"

"Then for the mental or moral or religious improvement of the inmates of the prison absolutely nothing whatever is done officially, no more than if they were cattle?"

To this last question the priest gave a French shrug of the shoulders and replied:

"Alas! alas! so it is! You know how it is all through Siberia, only here it is worse, because we are beyond the reach of all voluntary and philanthropic efforts, which in some parts, as you know, supplement the meagre provisions made by the Administration."

My good friend, while respecting my attitude, seemed to say, "This is not as I would choose to have it, but, you see, though above all a priest of God, I am primarily a servant of the state. What would you? Did you ever hear of a servant undertaking to reform his employer upon whom he is dependent for his bread and butter?"

We naturally had a good many conversations together about the reform of criminals in Korsakoffsk, and I am indebted to him for some most interesting incidents in that connection within his own observation; but from what I

## Prisoners of Russia

have already said it will be foreseen, perhaps, that his views on the point were not very enthusiastic or hopeful.

When to the fact of the merely animal existence of these convicts during the incarceration period we add one other fact, viz., the weeks and months of enforced idleness of many of them during the long winter, we have before us the prime cause of by far the larger number of the worst evils incident to the prison life in Sakhalin, as also throughout Siberia. Imagine over a hundred such men, mostly murderers, in a single herd, as I have seen them, who for months and months have no more occupation of any kind than swine in a sty, and it will be easy to believe that my contention on this point was agreed to even by the officials with whom I discussed the matter.

It is only as it concerns free convicts, and after release from prison, that the question of reformation can come within reasonable consideration.

What are the means especially provided for the mental and moral elevation of the free convict? So far as I could discover there were none whatever. There are no restrictions, however. He is free to follow his best inclinations as far as he can. To be sure, this does not seem all that could be wished for, but it will have been

## The Question of Reformation

already seen from what I have said, that in the way of material aids on these lines there is not much to choose between the lot of the exile and that of the officials over him. One kind of reformation there certainly is. Let us look at the completeness of the reformation of the circumstances and conditions of the convict compared with his former and ante-prison conditions.

These new conditions consist briefly in securing to the exile, first, a minimum of temptation; second, the restraint arising from the certainty that the slightest crime is sure to be followed by detection and punishment; the impossibility of immunity.

The thief has the smallest possible temptation to steal in a community where everybody is practically as poor in movable property as he is himself; he can imagine himself to be honest. Where private signatures have no money value, the forger has little temptation to imitate them.

Where the feminine element is so small, the incitements and temptations to carnal indulgences are so few and rare, he may imagine himself to be pure. Where the system of espionage is like the old curfew system, with the addition of a police visit at least every night, there is but small temptation to organize political plots. Where all non-officials are equal,

## Prisoners of Russia

and appearances go for nothing, there is small temptation for the vain or ambitious man to adopt vicious methods that he may affect a style of enviable superiority. Where there is absolutely no liquor to be had, there is small temptation to be a habitual drunkard.

Under these reformed conditions, so different from those under which the convict first became a criminal and afterward continued his course, it will be seen that the mere contemplation of ordinary crime would be suggestive of insanity.

Thus it will be understood that in Sakhalin it is not an easy thing for a convict to know whether he himself is reformed or not, while by the official mind this negative evidence is not accepted as proof of change of character. On the other hand, it is only just to admit that, whatever his previous crimes may have been, the treatment the convict receives is regulated exclusively according to his conduct while on the island. Once the convict is on the free list, so long as he respects the regulations, his advantages compare favourably with those of a blameless member of an agricultural community in western Russia. Socially he has an advantage nowhere else possible to him in this: his former crimes are no disability. As a free convict he is socially the equal of all others about

## The Question of Reformation

him. Whatever respect he may or may not receive from his neighbours, depends on what he does, and what he is now as it appears to them. From the fearful disadvantages of outside prejudice prevalent in Europe, the Siberian convict is entirely free. Whatever he may aspire to be morally and religiously, that he is at liberty to become. The church, if there be one near enough to be available, is his church. The priest of that church is his priest.

Although, as I have said, there is no special provision whatever for his mental improvement, there is nothing to keep him from it. If asked, as I have been so many times, "Do these men, the murderers, ever *really* reform?" I can simply reply that I found by far the larger proportion of them to be what in America would be called "good citizens"; that I found them to be sober, tolerably industrious, law-abiding persons, forming peaceable and prosperous communities. I have never yet witnessed so much as a dispute between any of them.

I have elsewhere mentioned that a relapse of any kind is followed by forfeiture of all privileges and a return to the prison, and as the denial of even a free convict in case of an accusation goes for very little, the general good conduct of these people is guarded by the strongest motives. From other descriptions I

## Prisoners of Russia

have given it will have been seen that a large number of them also, judging by their attendance and by their behaviour at church, are certainly very religious.

Few of us, I hope, in our own sphere would venture to go beyond these lines in the judgment of our neighbours. To some of my interrogators of the latter class I have recalled the story of David and his complex crime in which the murder of Uriah was but a single item; the story of Peter, and of the accidental inch which in the darkness intervened between him and the probable homicide of the High Priest's servant—crimes either of which in Russia might have sent the accused to Sakhalin to be one of the criminals now under consideration.

During recent years criminals other than murderers have been sent to Sakhalin, and as this new Siberia is intended hereafter more and more to take the place of the older continental Siberia, this course is every year being more and more pursued.

Of the total number of exiles in Sakhalin in 1890, the proportion of murderers is greater, therefore, than it is likely to be at any period after that date, and thus the statistics respecting the colony as it was then constituted furnish a better basis of calculation concerning the point in question than can figures from that date

# The Question of Reformation

onward. These statistics, which I submit below, will show that because a man's crime has happened to be that of murder he is not therefore specifically and wholly irreclaimable, and that he necessarily can be of no further use to the state. They show not only the fact, which might be accidental, that a large proportion have apparently reformed at given periods, but that this apparent reformation is observable in those who have arrived in Sakhalin at successive periods, or at a progressive ratio. That the subjoined statistics may be better understood, I would explain that all exiles in Sakhalin belong to one of three categories, promotion from the first to the second, and from the second to the third being regulated by the good conduct of the exile, and that, on the other hand, degradation from the third to the second or the first category may be the penalty for bad conduct.

*Class 1.*—Included forced labourers in mines; on public works, such as harbour or road construction; draining land, or in prison workshops.

*Class 2.*—Forced colonists; located in agricultural villages under police surveillance.

*Class 3.*—Agricultural peasant colonists, who are supplied by the Government with tools, seed, cattle, etc., and are allowed to develop

# Prisoners of Russia

farms, raise stock, etc., in their own way. After deduction of a fixed rate of interest on the capital supplied them, the surplus of profit is their own. These people are subject to only a very slight police surveillance and, except for compulsion of residence in the locality assigned them, are comfortably situated and practically free.

Leaving out their families, the exiles of all classes in Sakhalin on December 31, 1890, gave a total of 10,685, which were classified as follows:

Class 1. Forced workers.....	5,287 men, 673 women =	5,960
" 2. Forced colonists.....	3,677 men, 479 women =	4,156
" 3. Peasant colonists.....	422 men, 147 women =	569
Total.....		<u>10,685</u>

On January 1, 1890, there were:

Class 1. Forced workers.....	5,803
" 2. Forced colonists.....	3,712
" 3. Peasant colonists.....	<u>459</u>
Total .....	9,974

The difference between these figures during the year is thus accounted for:

*Arrived during 1890*

	SENT FROM EUROPE		Recon- demmed on Sak- halin.	PROMOTED.	
	via sea.	via Si- beria.		Forced colonists.	Peasant colonists.
1. Forced workers...	1,132	74	16	...	...
2. Forced colonists..	1	8	1	731	...
3. Peasant colonists.	....	..	..	...	179

# The Question of Reformation

*Taken off Lists*

	Died.	Fled or missing.	DEMITTED.		PROMOTED.	
			Europe.	Siberia.	Colo- nists.	Peasant colo- nists.
1. Forced workers..	153	127	5	47	731	..
2. Forced colonists..	81	3	5	29	..	179
3. Peasant colonists.	4	..	..	65	..	..

From this we see during the year an increase of 713 persons—i. e., 159 forced workers, 444 forced colonists, and 110 peasants. During 1890 alone 731 forced workers were promoted to forced colonists, and 179 were promoted to peasant colonists.

In 1882 the forced workers formed 62 per cent of the total Russian population. In 1890, notwithstanding the arrival of 1,232 fresh convicts, who were all forced workers, and who are included in these statistics, this proportion was reduced to 30 per cent, or about one half what it was eight years before.

This successful conversion of forced colonists into peasant colonists in so short a time is certainly very instructive and encouraging as regards the reformation of the individuals, and the development of otherwise useless land. It should be very suggestive to more civilized states, regarding a better use of their criminals.

These statistics refer, as I have remarked,

## Prisoners of Russia

to a period when Sakhalin was reserved only for the worst criminals. Among the females sent to the island during this period, the proportion of murderesses to all the other classes of criminals put together was five to one. Of the males, three times more had been condemned for murder than for any other crime. To allow a wide margin for judicial and other mistakes, let us suppose that of the 4,724 exiles stated to have been promoted, only 2,000 had been really guilty of murder. This gives us certainly 2,000 persons, once murderers, now peaceful, productive, successful colonists, and in this fact may be found my answer to the question at the beginning of this chapter respecting the possibility of the reformation of murderers.

If it be allowed that I have now earned the right to put a question myself, I would ask:

“In what respect would it be better if these 2,000 people had been hanged?”

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE GEOGRAPHY AND NATURAL RESOURCES OF SAKHALIN

ALTHOUGH so little known, Sakhalin must be classed among the larger islands of the world, being in length about the same as England. According to an official report made to the Russian Geographical Society by Polyakoff in 1883, Sakhalin is 670 miles in length, and has a width varying from 20 to 150 miles.

It is situated between the extreme eastern coast of the mainland of Siberia on the west, and the promontory of Kamchatka on the east. On the north and east it is bounded by the Okhotsk Sea, on the south by the Strait of La Pérouse, and on the west by the Gulf of Tartary, which through the Bay of Castries and the Bay of Amur connects the Sea of Japan on the southwest with the Okhotsk on the northwest; while La Pérouse Strait, on the south of Sakhalin, connects the Sea of Japan and the Gulf of Tartary on the south and west, with the Okhotsk Sea and the Pacific Ocean on the east and southeast,

## Prisoners of Russia

At a point on the northwest coast, above Alexandrovsk, the water channel between the island and the mainland is so narrow that for about six months in the year the only post route to St. Petersburg from it crosses the channel on the ice from the little village of Pogobi to Cape Lazaneff, a point on the eastern coast of the mainland of Siberia. This proximity may partly explain the fact that this island was, till comparatively recent times, supposed to be a promontory. It is said that La Pérouse had a suspicion to the contrary in 1787, but no demonstration of its being an island was arrived at until so late as 1849 or 1852.

The earliest notice of this territory seems to date back to 1643, when it was referred to by one Martin Gerritt of Holland; also, about the same time, by Captain de Vries, and Père Hieronymus.

The first people to make any use of the island were the Japanese, who established more and more fishing stations there, and who, up to about 1850, regarded their exclusive right to the entire island, which they called Karafuto or Karapto, as unquestioned.

It appears that in 1807, on the first visit of Russians to Sakhalin, Captain Nemelski hoisted the Russian flag somewhere in the northwest part of the island, but that the Rus-

## The Geography of Sakhalin

sian Government afterward disowned the proceeding.

On a map published by Gall & Inglis, of Edinburgh, in 1850, as on various other maps of about that date, it will be found that from Nertchinsk, at the junction of the Shilka and Amur rivers, the region extending to the north of Nickolaivsk, Sakhalin included, is all represented as part of Manchuria, and as Chinese territory. It seems pretty certain that up to 1850, and even 1852, the Russians still regarded the island of Karapto as a promontory.

In 1853 Russia commenced to establish a station and a military post in the northwest of the island, near the site of the present station of Dui, but on the outbreak of the Turkish war relinquished them.

Between 1860 and 1867 Russia employed scientific expeditions to explore and report upon the island, and these reports, of which I shall have more to say hereafter, were followed by further plans for the occupation of the northern and western part of it. The principal inducement, as exhibited in these reports, was the finding of Jurassic layers of coal, situated close by the present site of Dui, near the mouth of Castries Bay. The prospect of a coal-mine, represented as inexhaustible, close beside what was said to be a promising site for a port, must have

## Prisoners of Russia

been regarded by the Russian Government, which had a navy in the East but no coaling station, as only a little less desirable than a gold-mine.

There was another desideratum, which some officials regarded as being of equal or even superior importance. The prodigious cost of the unsuccessful system for preventing the perpetual escapes of the more dangerous exiles scattered throughout the vast area of Siberia could only be remedied by finding a place with such natural barriers as would render all attempts at escape entirely hopeless. Of this difficult and troublesome problem Sakhalin would be the solution.

Regardless of the peaceable Japanese, who by possession considered the entire island rightly their own, the Russians extended their stations towards the south and the best-chosen localities and fishing settlements of the Japanese along the extreme southern and southeastern coasts. Wherever the Russians planted a station, they established by the side of it a military post. At that time the Japanese did not possess a single man-of-war; the Russians had not only an army on the spot, they also had a navy, with its Asiatic Squadron. They did not employ these forces against the peaceful Japanese; not even in words did they threaten such a course.

## The Geography of Sakhalin

In the generosity of its heart, the Russian Government proposed to them a bargain.

The Japanese are fond of a variety of names, not only for themselves but for their possessions. Besides Karafuto and Karapto they had called Sakhalin by the name "Sakhalin ula hota," the meaning of which is "Rocks at the mouth of the black river." For this single possession of Rocks at the mouth of the black river, Russia offered to give them in exchange a whole string of islands known as the Kuriles, also to pay a small fixed sum annually for a certain term of years.

In 1875 these terms were accepted by the Japanese, and the island of Sakhalin, which is as long as England, became the exclusive property of the Russian Government. The Japanese now know that if all the Kurile islands were put up at auction to-morrow, the entire lot would not fetch a shilling.

Had Russia advanced a little farther from her recent barbarism, she would hardly have stooped to such huckstering, but, following the example of the more civilized of the other Christian nations of Europe, when she had discovered that this unprotected island might be useful to her, she would have provoked an excuse for slaughtering the peaceful occupants of the island, and then honourably annexed it.

## Prisoners of Russia

In accordance with the terms of the Russo-Japanese treaty, the Japanese retain a consular agent at Korsakoffsk, who receives the stipulated annual payment from the Russians, and pays them a specified *pro rata* tax levied upon Japanese fishermen who continue to preponderate in the annual fishing excursions to the Sakhalin waters.

If we revert to the manner in which the wonderfully large area of Siberia was added to Russia, and to the manner in which a large slice of Manchuria was added thereto, we shall see that it was precisely by the same singularly Russian method that she noiselessly crept into Sakhalin, and afterward added that also to her eastern territory.

While we cannot be surprised at the suspicion which these achievements have inspired in rival nations, we cannot withhold from Russia exceptional credit for the fact that in each of these instances the extension of territory was acquired by the Russian Government without the authorized shedding of a drop of human blood. Neither of these territories has been acquired by armed conquest, but each in its turn simply by military menace and gradual absorption.

The spelling I have adopted for the name of the island under consideration is justified by

## The Geography of Sakhalin

the fact that it gives the nearest approach in English to the pronunciation of the designation in common usage among the Russians who reside upon it and in its neighbourhood. To give the pronunciation with exactness a German form would be called for, but if I spelt the word as Sachhalin, its pronunciation in English would be liable to a perversion much greater than can possibly occur by the spelling Sakhalin, which I have accordingly adopted.

Sakhalin is an exceedingly hilly country. Its valleys are, for the larger part, narrow, and their area comparatively small. The principal range of hills runs from Cape Crillon on the extreme southwest of the island along the entire western coast; some of the hills in this range are the highest on the island, several of them reaching an altitude of about five thousand feet. The other principal range is of lower hills; it runs from Cape Notoro on the southwest, with a good many breaks, along the east coast, somewhat back from the shore, until it unites with the western range in the north of the island and above Dui, where another break occurs. It then continues along the east coast up to the most northern point of the island. The western range seems to be a broken continuation of the Yezo chain on the south of La Pérouse Strait, and to form a link between this and

## Prisoners of Russia

the more lofty mountains in the Kamchatka promontory.

Whereas, however, the Yezo range is actively volcanic, and supplies to commerce an inexhaustible yield of solid sulphur; and whereas the Kamchatka range is notorious for the incessant and often violent activity of its volcanoes, the Sakhalin link presents no signs of volcanic activity, and the island is entirely free from the earthquakes which are of such frequent occurrence both in Yezo and in Kamchatka.

The best pass through the western range of Sakhalin is that known as the Dui Pass, which runs from Dui to the valley of the Toronai and to the Bay of Terpenia. It is through this pass that runs the only so-called road of any considerable length of which Sakhalin can boast. This road runs from Dui through the valley of the Toronai towards Terpenia Bay, thence down the island near the eastern coast, where it diverges to the west, and then turns directly south through the dense forest down the middle of the island to Aniva Bay. Here it turns due east along the coast of Korsakoffsk. This road, which is as yet unfinished, is regarded as the proudest feat the officials have achieved on the island. From my experience in going over it, I should describe it as a regular bone-breaker, for it is little more than a line of clearing

## The Geography of Sakhalin

through a dense, interminable and almost unbroken forest. As this road, which is the only open route for the St. Petersburg mail from April to October between Korsakoffsk and Dui, is during the greater part of that period, and for about three hundred miles, only passable for dog-sleths, it will be understood that this solitary track is not exactly a Roman road, nor in any sense an English turnpike.

With this single exception, there is no other road at present in the island, except one from Dui through Alexandrovsk to Pogobi, which is simply an extension of the Dui road, and such other roads of a few miles in length as are necessary for purely local purposes.

The west coast of Sakhalin is, for the most part, precipitous and rocky; the east coast, from the hills to the water-line, inclined to be flat and sandy. The Bay of Aniva is over sixty miles wide, and, with its exceedingly varied range of bold hills, presents a very handsome appearance. It is altogether the most attractive spot in the island.

The principal fishing grounds are off the east coast, the points of rendezvous for the vessels engaged in it during the summer season being Naiboutchi and Manone, between the Bay of Mauka and the Bay of Patience. From conversations I had with various persons en-

## Prisoners of Russia

gaged in the trade, I judge that the fruitfulness of these waters is not yet generally known. A Russian prince whom I met out there, who owned and commanded a very large whaling steamer and was accompanied by two sailing vessels of his own, told me that whales were so abundant that it took him only a few weeks to load up all his tanks, and that, though the season was so short, he had managed to make two trips so far each summer. Yet he seemed to be the only person who was exploiting that region on anything like a large scale. The Japanese fishermen, who largely preponderate in numbers, confine their catches mostly to the salmon-trout, which are in such abundant shoals there, and leave the whales entirely to the very few others who have the capital and the enterprise that branch of the trade requires.

I do not pretend to be a judge in such matters, but I am very much of the opinion that to somebody or other the hint contained in these lines might prove to have great commercial value, as proved already by Mr. Dlubigh in the Mauka vicinity.

A great defect pertaining to Sakhalin is this: that along all its fifteen hundred and more miles of coast it is entirely destitute not only of a good harbour, but of a single safe anchorage.



Woodchoppers returning from work.



## The Geography of Sakhalin

It is true that Dui, which is its principal *entrepôt*, is called a port, but even there seagoing vessels of the most moderate draught can neither take in nor discharge cargo, except by lighters. At Korsakoffsk, which does not pretend to be a port, the same also holds good, as it is unsafe for any seagoing vessel of the smallest dimensions to anchor within a mile or a mile and a half of the little wooden landing pier there. The reasons for this, which are natural and said to be entirely insurmountable, I will reserve till I come to deal with the peculiar features of the climate of this island.

There are three lakes in Sakhalin, one of which is about fifty miles in length. Of the numerous rivers the larger are the Toronai, which gives its name to the valley through which it passes, and the Tym. Both these rivers empty themselves on the east coast into the Okhotsk Sea, and neither of them is navigable. The smaller streams are numerous, and a European would say of most of them that they "abound" in fish. Better and more neglected trout streams than those of them which I have seen it would be difficult to find anywhere, nor is this at all remarkable in a country where the fresh-water fish enjoy the protection of absolute neglect.

## Prisoners of Russia

The climate of Sakhalin presents an exceptional phenomenon, consequent upon other phenomena which are entirely local. Some incidental remarks respecting this peculiar climate which appeared in my recent book on Life with Trans-Siberian Savages were ridiculed by one or two of its many reviewers, who found, simply by reference to a map, that my statements were utterly inconsistent with the latitude of the region in question.

The facts as I have stated them, however, remain. And although the most northernly point of Sakhalin is only  $54^{\circ} 22'$ , while that of Scotland is  $56^{\circ} 30'$ , and though the larger part of the island of Sakhalin has the same latitude as central France, the mean temperature from January, even in the centre of the island, is given in the official tables as  $10^{\circ}$  below zero Fahrenheit, while during the same month it sometimes falls as low as  $14^{\circ}$  below. It is equally true that during the greater part of the winter the Okhotsk Sea is frozen over, and that from about the month of October till about the month of May navigation ceases in Sakhalin waters, because during that period the entire island is locked in by impenetrable ice.

On the contrary, for the month of July the same official tables give the mean temperature as  $62^{\circ} 37'$  Fahrenheit at Korsakoffsk, on the Bay

## The Climate of Sakhalin

of Aniva. I have myself seen the thermometer standing at above 70° Fahrenheit in the shade. When I was in Sakhalin in 1890, the officers at Korsakoffsk, both civil and military, for many weeks running, wore uniforms made entirely of white duck, the material being the same as is commonly used in the tropics. As they all seemed to have a good stock of these uniforms for frequent renewal, it was evident that the general use of them that summer was no exceptional or unforeseen circumstance.

But what is the explanation, you will ask, of these interesting variations and contrasts?

In approaching what I assume to be but a proximate answer to the question, several facts will have to be noted which are strictly of a local nature.

By reference to a map it will be seen that the only land to the north and northeast of Sakhalin is that of northeastern Siberia, including Kamchatka. The greater part of the promontory of Kamchatka is within precisely the same latitude as Great Britain, yet the extreme coldness of that region as compared with Great Britain is a fact with which everybody is familiar. About October two events of leading importance in this consideration occur nearly or quite simultaneously. The first is the freezing of parts of the Okhotsk Sea; the second, the set-

## Prisoners of Russia

ting in of a northeast wind. This wind, which thenceforward continues all through the winter, at once increases the force of the perpetual northeast currents, which not only carry the newly formed fields of ice and pile them up all along the eastern coast of Sakhalin, but impel them through the Bay of Amur, choking up the narrow channel opposite Pogobi, filling up the Gulf of Tartary, and forming a junction with the floes driving through La Pérouse Strait from the east, thus completing the chain by which the entire island is completely bound and locked in rugged ice for the entire winter.

The Sea of Okhotsk in due time becomes completely frozen over, and remains so from that time till the spring of the following year. During all this prolonged winter time, the whole distance between Sakhalin and the north pole is one unbroken area of snow and ice, the island being a continuation, an appendage, of this immense frozen area. Over this immense arctic area sweeps the northeast wind that prevails in Sakhalin throughout the winter. The cold it brings with it, and the further cold incident to the ice floes which it brings to the Sakhalin shores at the beginning and end of the winter, compel us to class it as among the first of the local phenomena to which the low winter temperature of Sakhalin may be attributed.

## The Climate of Sakhalin

To this northeast wind may also be largely attributed another phenomenon for which Sakhalin is notorious. During the prevalence of this wind, the east coast in particular, and to a great extent the island in general, is shrouded in fogs, only slightly varying in density. Not that it is the only cause of them, for, as I have said, at all times there are strong and cold ocean currents from the colder north impinging upon the island. These strike with special force upon the eastern coast, and in part continue their course through La Pérouse Strait, always tending to the precipitation of fogs, though they are at their worst only when the northeast wind is strongest and most persistent.

I have already stated that in all its fifteen hundred miles of coast, Sakhalin is not only devoid of a harbour worthy of the name, but does not even possess a single spot anywhere which is regarded as a safe anchorage. I recur to this point here because of the intimate relation between this fact also and the prevailing winds and currents under consideration. The absence of safe harbours and anchorage is not owing to the absence of bays and inlets. A reference to the map of Sakhalin will show that, owing to its extremely varied configuration, its bays and inlets are, on the contrary, exceptionally numerous.

## Prisoners of Russia

The swift northeastern ocean currents, which derive so much additional force from the prevailing northeast winds, combine to create also this defect, which they perpetuate in several ways.

For example, Nickolaivsk, just across the channel from Sakhalin, for a long time, and until recent years, was the one port of Siberia. Dui, farther south, was and is still the one so-called port of Sakhalin, and it was once thought that it could be made into an excellent harbour. The strength of the northeast ocean current, however, has kept the delta of the Amur in such a shifting and dangerous state that sea-going vessels have for some time almost entirely avoided the harbour of Nickolaivsk. Yet, so far as an inspection of the map would indicate, the situation of Nickolaivsk would appear exceedingly favourable for a safe and permanent port.

At Dui the force of these currents causes the sea bottom to be so shifting and uncertain from year to year, that even the Government coasting steamer is obliged to anchor with great care a long way from the shore, with which it can have no communication except by lighters.

And this is not all that these currents do. Engineers have not only contemplated, but have several times commenced, the construction of

## The Climate of Sakhalin

harbour works and docks there, but the prodigious force with which these currents drive the ice floes at the beginning and end of the winter is so thoroughly irresistible that the works which have been attempted over and over again are now relinquished as impracticable.

From the dangers that beset the inhospitable coasts of Sakhalin on the east and on the west, there might be supposed to be a partial immunity on the south. So there is, in certain parts of the south coast, especially on the eastern shore of the Bay of Aniva, and in the vicinity of Korsakoffsk, in the northeastern portion of this bay. This is not because the northeast ocean current is less strong through La Pérouse Strait, but because of the prominent and extensive protection afforded to Aniva Bay by Cape Edonna. La Pérouse Strait is directly open to this current, and in line with it, but, in consequence of the position of Cape Edonna, the course of the current is diverted towards the southern shore of the channel, where it impinges with its greatest force upon the extreme northern coast of Yezo, at about Cape Soya and for a long distance to the west of it.

So much for some of the local natural causes of the coldness of the winter climate of Sakhalin, and for the natural causes which, even if the island were a free colony, would threaten a par-

## Prisoners of Russia

tial continuance at least of its exceptional and almost unique isolation in comparison with the others of the greater islands of the world.

We now come to the summer climate of Sakhalin, and to the local natural causes for the greatness of the contrast between it and the winter climate. Our task on this point will be a short one. About the month of May, the prevailing wind is exactly the reverse, and for the northeast wind there is substituted a southwest wind, or monsoon as it is called, which is just as continuous throughout the summer as the northeast wind is in the winter.

As the line of direction of this wind traverses the plains of India and the immense and for the most part torrid area of southeastern Asia, the land being continuous for about four thousand miles, with only the Gulf of Tartary between the mainland and Sakhalin; as the ice floes simultaneously cease, and the ocean currents from the north and northeast become less cold, and as, further, the latitude of a great part of Sakhalin is the same as that of Great Britain, it is not so remarkable as it at first may appear, that, though the winters in Sakhalin are so extremely cold, the average summer weather in the southern part of the island is more uniform and warm than that of Great Britain.

As the fog conditions of the winter months

## The Natives of Sakhalin

are reversed in the summer, during the latter season these fogs almost wholly disappear. For weeks in succession I have seen the air there as clear as I have found it in Nubia, and during all those weeks I wore in southern Sakhalin the same suits of white flannel and of duck as both previously and subsequently I wore in Ceylon.

The so-called native population of Sakhalin is an exceedingly sparse one, and consists of Gilyaks, Orokaps, and Ainus.

The Gilyaks, who are said to number about three thousand, confine themselves to the northern part of the island.

The Orokaps, said to be of the same stock as the Orochons of the lower Amur, numbered, I was told, not more than two or three hundred. The Ainus, of whom I have given a detailed account in my *Life with Trans-Siberian Savages*, are estimated at about three thousand. They are now to be found only in the more southern parts of the island, where they live in villages in the interior of the interminable forests.

The staple article of diet with all these tribes is fish; but the Ainus are the hunters of the island, and vary this diet with the flesh of deer, bear, dog, and other wild animals. The deer they kill with bows and arrows. In killing

## Prisoners of Russia

the bear, their final reliance is upon long, sharp, and strong knives, which they obtain by barter from the Japanese; and in the taking of all kinds of animals they are very skilful in the use of concealed traps. They are naturally a mild, gentle, and courteous race, but, with the capriciousness which belongs to children and savages everywhere, they can be very ferocious, as I have found to my discomfort on more than one occasion. The Ainus are regarded as the real aborigines, first of Sakhalin, and subsequently of Japan also.

The habits of these savages could never have been more primitive than I found them. Their huts are of the simplest description. The walls and roof are of the roughest thatch, the latter having a large hole in the top to let out some of the smoke which rises from the fire in a shallow pit in the middle of the mud floor.

The clothing of these people varies as widely as the climate. During the summer they cling to the freedom of nakedness. In winter they wear most grotesque arrangements of furs, and during the times intermediate thin and surprisingly tough dresses made of dressed fish-skin, the suits of this material for special occasions being elaborately but roughly embroidered. Birch bark in its natural state is added in patches to some of their garments, and

## The Natives of Sakhalin

a fabric of coarse texture made from the fibre of it is also used by them for clothing.

The Ainus are unique among all human races in this: that the entire body in both sexes is covered with a growth of rather long hairs.

Looking at the rudeness of the huts of the Ainus, and at the length and severity of their unbroken winters, during which the temperature sometimes falls as low as fourteen degrees below zero, it would seem at first thought that the exposure of a single winter season would effect the total extinction of these poor creatures. But the hut of the summer becomes simply the interior of what externally appears in winter to be merely a snow mound with a hole in the top. With the food their ant-like habits have stored during the summer added to the uninterrupted products of the chase, their winter life, I am told, is, by comparison with their summer life, not quite so terrible as might be imagined.

In my book on my life with these people I have shown that the Ainus of Sakhalin are probably the survivors of the most authentic and ancient race of savages now to be found in Asia.

I have been in contact with many tribes of savages on the other continents, but the Ainus of Sakhalin I regard as the most dirty and devout, amiable and courteous, of any savages I

## Prisoners of Russia

have had the pleasure of knowing, and I shall never cease to be grateful to them for their generous, simple, unaffected hospitality.

The Japanese population consists of only a few Japanese summer immigrants, occupying temporary huts in some three or four fishing stations on the eastern and southern coast under the treaty regulations.

The civilized population is exclusively Russian, and the entire administration of the affairs of the island, internal and external, pertains of course to the Imperial Government of the Russian Empire, of which Sakhalin now forms a part. In 1880 the number of exiles in Sakhalin was said to be about three thousand, exclusive of troops and officers, civil and military. Since that time, the numbers of these classes have steadily increased, and are likely to do so hereafter in still larger proportions.

The wild animals of Sakhalin include deer, bears, foxes, wolves, dogs, ermine, and other smaller species. Tradition has added the tiger to this list, this animal being said to have occasionally strayed from Manchuria across the frozen strait near Cape Lazareff, but I have never been able to obtain for this tradition the most distant verification.

From these animals the Ainu, in particular, obtain the meat by which their usual fish diet

## The Natives of Sakhalin

is sometimes varied, and the very excellent furs with which they make their grotesquely patched winter garments. With the surplus they obtain, by barter, knives, arrowheads, fish-hooks, and other rough implements from the Japanese traders, who, under careful restrictions, are occasionally allowed to touch the coast in their vicinity for this purpose. These restrictions include the total exclusion of fire-arms and of anything which can induce intoxication.

These occasional barterings have never been carried beyond the limit of the simple and immediate wants of the aborigines. Nothing which could be called a fur trade has ever existed in Sakhalin, and the prospect of such a thing is even more remote now than at any previous period. The natives have neither motive nor opportunity for attempting to create such a trade. Although they may not happen to know it, and have no occasion to feel it, the home of these natives is entirely circumscribed within the penal coast-lines, the security of which an open trade would compromise. Supposing it were allowed them, the only gain would be money, which has neither use nor value with them, except as ornaments for their women.

Russian convicts could not be allowed to engage in the trade, and officers have other occupations.

## Prisoners of Russia

Even in the way of sport, the hunting of wild animals is not one of the pastimes of the Russian officer in Sakhalin. Strange as it may seem to the English military officer, I never heard the mention of a day's shooting in the forests of the island by any one of the many Russian officers stationed there.

They are not lacking in furs, however, and from the number some of them showed me I judged that they had other and easier ways of getting as many as they cared to possess.

I was much struck with the tails of the foxes in Sakhalin. They were at least twice as large as any I have seen elsewhere. The colour on the upper part was a light brown, the sides of a beautiful gold tint graduated to a pure white on the underpart. These were used chiefly for the ornamentation of the heavier winter sleigh robes.

Some naval officers with whom I took luncheon on H. M. S. Leander, some months afterward, told me that they went ashore on the west coast of the island for a day's shooting in the forest, but found, to their disappointment, absolutely nothing. This did not surprise me, however, for here, just as even in the best parts of the Rocky Mountains, except by accident, the larger animals are not likely to be found except by the aborigines in the one case,

## The Fauna of Sakhalin

as by the trained trappers and hunters in the other.

This is sufficiently illustrated in the narrative I have elsewhere given of my own hunting experiences with the Ainus.

With the exception of water-fowl, which are wonderfully numerous in the bays and inlets on the southern part of the island, I found no use for a shotgun except in the vicinity of Korsakoffsk. Although I discovered that my official friends strongly disliked my wandering far from the settlement alone, I managed to bag a few snipe, and one or two specimens of hazel grouse.

The feathered tribe is very scantily represented in Sakhalin. If we omit the twittering of an occasional sparrow in the shabbily kept gardens of some of the officers, the song of birds is an unknown sound. This all-pervading silence deepens, if possible, the dreaminess of the forests, in which the deadliness of the solitude finds its most dismal expression.

One of my most delightful and astonishing surprises in Sakhalin occurred near Cape Edon-na, where I saw the kingfisher referred to in an earlier chapter.

For a few days in July, much to my delight, a few swallows came skimming through the sky, sailing over the exercise yards of the main pris-

## Prisoners of Russia

on with all the gaiety imaginable; then I saw them no more.

On the beach near Cape Crillon I once saw also some black crows, but I never encountered any in any other part of the island.

While sailing along the coast of Sakhalin, the traveller rarely sees a spot which is not covered with wood. To the north of Korsakoffsk I ascended the highest of the hills in that vicinity, which in the beautiful weather then prevailing commanded a view northward of at least fifty miles in extent up the centre of that part of the island, as well as to the east and the west, but not a single spot clear of trees was visible. Such an extensive stretch of primitive unbroken forest, I think, I never beheld in any other part of the world. If such a trip were possible, I was told that one might start from Korsakoffsk, half a mile back of the prison, and continue northward for four or five hundred miles through an unbroken forest. I never saw a single tree on the island, however, which, either for its size or its beauty, commanded my admiration or fixed my attention.

Upon the mountains in the southern part of the island the trees are mostly deciduous for the first seven hundred feet; thence, to about a thousand feet, conifers; thereafter, to about twelve hundred feet, they are again deciduous.

# Natural Resources of Sakhalin

Beyond that the growth is chiefly pine, nearly or quite to the summits.

The species which most abound are the Norway spruce, fir, larch, the Siberian fir, birch, and elm, the oak, and maple. Everywhere, however, and in all cases, the growth is stunted and imperfect, none of the trees arriving at anything like fair proportions.

There are said to be from six to eight hundred kinds of phanerogamous plants growing in the island, about twenty of which are peculiar to Sakhalin. In the main, the various species correspond pretty closely to those of the mainland opposite and of Manchuria, in corresponding latitudes.

## THE RESOURCES OF SAKHALIN FOR A PROSPECTIVE SELF-SUSTAINING COLONY

Russia does not pretend that she acquires new territory chiefly for the benefit of the unfortunate people to whom it belongs, as England does. Among the lower motives which actuated Russia in her sly and crafty scheming for the acquisition of Sakhalin, doubtless one of the strongest was the prospective possession of the coal-beds now known as the Dui coal-mines.

It is said that in the reports made by scientific commissioners between 1860 and 1867 it was represented that these Jurassic coal layers

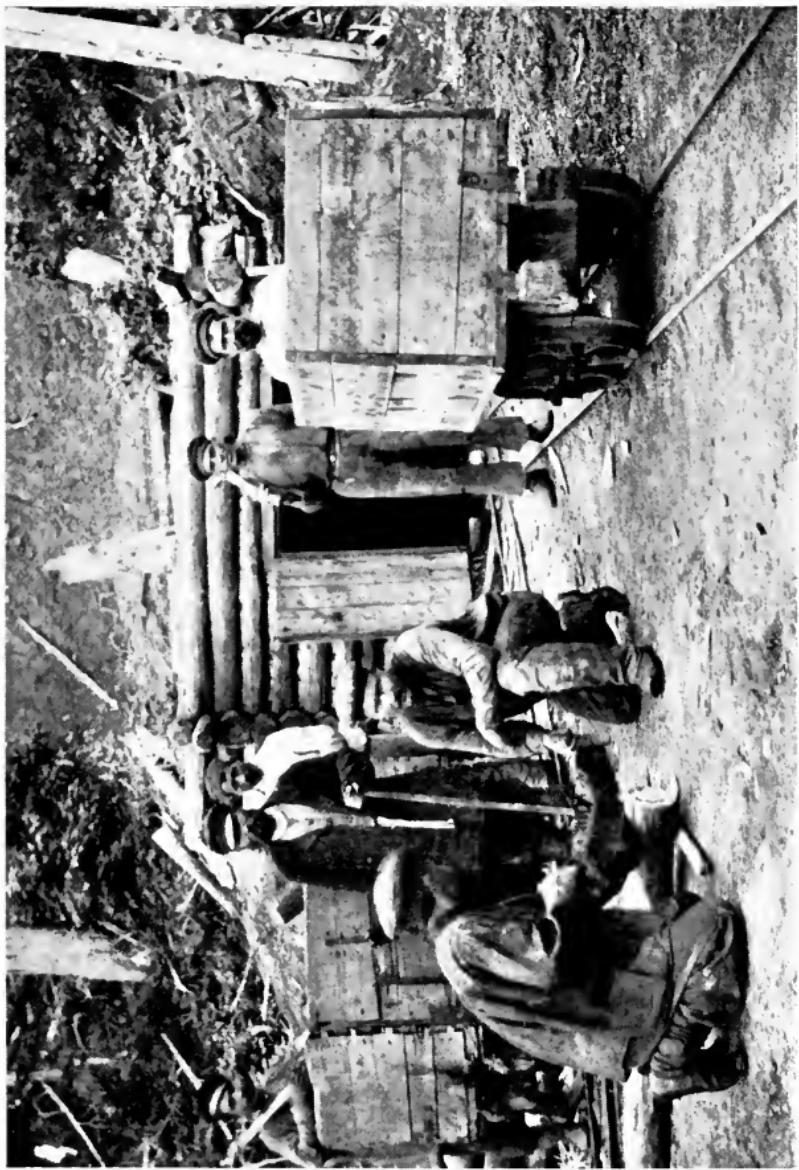
## Prisoners of Russia

were inexhaustible in quantity and excellent in quality.

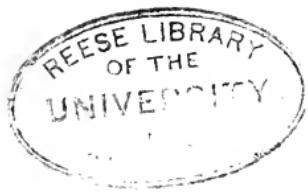
Comparing my own observations with the experience of several steamship captains who have used it, I think I may say that the only opinion as to its quality now is that it is comparatively inferior. It is said to contain from 60 to 70 per cent of pure carbon, but it is of the "dusty nut" kind. It is not in demand to any extent, therefore, for domestic uses, and for steaming purposes is incomparably inferior to the coal from Cardiff or Newcastle. Its price is about six shillings higher than is paid for coal in Japan; hence foreign steamers buy only as much as their immediate necessity may require.

As this coal-mine is entirely a surface mine, it is not very difficult to make an estimate of the total quantity of coal it may be expected to yield, and this is now found to be by no means as inexhaustible as the early official reports represented it to be. The mines were at first leased to a company. Under the terms of the lease this company was allowed to employ four hundred hard-labour convicts (*Katorjiki*) at fixed wages, and was bound to supply to the ships of the Russian Government a given quantity per annum at specified rates.

Strange to say, this arrangement was unsatisfactory to the convicts; further, it was unre-



Entrance to the Vladimirska mine.



## The Coal-Beds of Sakhalin

munerative to the contractors. After two or three years the agreement was cancelled, and from that time the mines have been worked directly by the Government.

The total quantity of coal remaining in these mines is now said not to exceed about eighty thousand tons, and, as useful labour for the convicts is so hard to find, the daily output is kept down to the minimum requirement.

The relative value of this coal is likely to be diminished in the future by the fact that in the prosecution of cuttings for that part of the trans-Siberian railway which is to run between the Usuri valley and Vladivostok other coal deposits have been found, which are said to be both larger in quantity and better in quality than those in Sakhalin. As these newly discovered deposits are alongside the railway running into its near eastern terminus at Vladivostok, the present headquarters of the Russian Asiatic Squadron and the only safe harbour for foreign shipping in that entire region, the demand upon the coal-mines of Dui is likely to become exceedingly small.

The iron-mines near Alexandrovsk are also on the west coast, and over a hundred miles to the north of Dui. The early official reports on these prospective mines were of the same enthusiastic kind as those about the coal-mines of

## Prisoners of Russia

Dui. These iron-mines, like the coal-mines, were also worked by contractors for two or three years, and like them were also relinquished and have since been irregularly worked directly by the Government. I have not seen these mines, but I was told by officers who had been on duty there that both as to quantity and quality these iron-mines, from which so much was at first expected, had turned out to be much more disappointing than the coal-mines.

The question of the agricultural capacity of the island is a large one, and any answer which may be given must naturally include a good deal of speculation, except as it may apply to such areas as have come under actual observation.

In 1881 there was no Department of Agriculture in the Administration of Sakhalin, nor had any definite lines been laid down on which to attempt its development. At that early period of its fixed occupation by Russia, the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences sent out Mr. Polyakoff to Sakhalin, and his report to that society was in many respects sufficiently in contrast to the official reports made by Government officers between 1860 and 1867 to create considerable surprise and disappointment.

Mr. Polyakoff said that "one of the principal valleys is inclosed by hills, which are both

## The Soil of Sakhalin

too steep and too barren to justify attempts at cultivation. The bottom of the valley has but a thin coating of arable soil, having clay for sub-soil, making the whole exceedingly marshy. One may walk upon it without sinking very deeply in the mud, but it is intersected by peat moors and deep marshes. . . . Nowhere is the ground fit for agriculture. . . . It mostly resembles the worst parts of Olonets, with this difference: that even in the forest it is often covered with pools of water. Even the kind of cultivation which is carried on in Olonets by means of clearing and burning the forests is rendered impossible by the marshy ground of the forests themselves. In the vicinity of Dui these conditions render agriculture, and gardening almost impossible. The few patches of better land occasionally met with higher up the valley are already under cultivation. The small settlements of Rykovo and Malo-Tymovskaya are the most appropriate spots for agriculture on all the island, but even here has to be maintained the same struggle against nature. Oats do not ripen there, and only barley can be grown successfully. As to the roads which connect these settlements, they are simply impassable. Tracks have been cut through the forests, but horses sink in the marshes. Much hope had been placed also in the valley of the Tym, which con-

## Prisoners of Russia

tinues the Alexandrovsk valley to the northeast and reaches the Sea of Okhotsk. But its marshy soil, and still more the cold and fogs of the Sea of Okhotsk, render agriculture quite impossible in this valley except at its upper end. Its vegetation is sub-polar; and on the sea-coast it has all the characters of the Tundra.

"If later on a few spots available for orchards and corn-fields can be found in the valley of the Tym after a careful search, it would be advisable to await the results obtained in the already existing settlements before creating new ones. All the more so, as great difficulty is already experienced in supplying these settlements with food, and as there is already a serious lack of provisions in the colony.

"As to the hope entertained by creating villages at the mouth of the Tym, it would be a delusion to entertain it, as this is a region of Tundras and polar-birch."

An Italian, Dr. Petri, writing in the *Jahresbericht* of the Berne Geographical Society for 1883-'84, says:

"The whole colonization of Sakhalin is a big lie circulated by the authorities." He claims that, while the local authorities show on paper that there are 2,700 acres under cultivation, the survey of M. Karaulovski has shown that only 1,375 are cultivated; that the 700 families

## The Soil of Sakhalin

of hard-labour convicts who were promised twenty acres of arable soil per male soul, have succeeded in clearing less than two acres per family; that, in conclusion, the island is quite unfit for agriculture, and that the Government has been induced to take this mistaken step by the false reports of people interested in the undertaking.

These views of Mr. Polyakoff and Dr. Petri I have taken partly from the original publications, and partly from transcriptions by Prince Kropotkin in his *In Russian and French Prisons*.

Although I have no inclination to dispute the accuracy of these impressions, it must be borne in mind that they seem to relate almost entirely to the middle part of the island, to the north of the Bay of Patience, and to a region east of Dui and extending northeast of Alexandrovsk, whereas it is the region south of the Bay of Patience to which the attention of the Agricultural Department, if not then, is now principally directed.

It is unnecessary to remark that under any circumstances agricultural development has to be a very slow process, and that, while statements by the officials who have it in charge are apt to be coloured by their enthusiasm, adverse and irresponsible critics are accused of being prejudiced. The chief of the Agricultural De-

## Prisoners of Russia

partment of Sakhalin told me a great deal about the progress of the work being carried on in various parts of the island under his superintendence and guidance. His enthusiasm was so great, and the expectations he expressed were so hopeful, that I was obliged to believe that they would not be indulged in by such a very intelligent man after personal inspection of the ground except for fairly good reasons. On this, as on all other Russian matters, however, I preferred the evidence which was visible to my own eyes. Having visited thirteen villages in this southern district and inspected the farm lands connected with them, my impressions of them were moderately hopeful, although I admit that they may have been incorrect.

In the building of new villages, the enterprise displayed astonished me. The quality of the cottages is altogether better than is found in any part of Siberia proper in the many agricultural regions which I have visited.

According to the English standard, the term farm could hardly be applied to any holding I saw here. According to the farm standard of very many parts of New England, however, as of that of the poorer parts of Virginia and of certain emigrant settlements in the West, the so-called farms I visited would be estimated "poor to middling." Some of the grass crops were lux-

## Agriculture in Sakhalin

uriantly high, but they were generally rank, with a very undue admixture of weeds, and the hay had little fragrance. During the summer season it was almost the only food I ever saw given to the horses we used, yet they certainly managed to do as fast and continuous work on the roads as the most ambitious driver could desire.

The grain crops, which were largely of barley and included some wheat, were everywhere thin, and in some parts exceedingly scanty.

In the way of garden produce I saw some capital crops of potatoes, and in a few places some fairly good beet-root. In a few gardens I also saw asparagus, cabbages, peas, French beans and lettuce, and had the best proof that some of them were as good as could be wished. Cucumbers were in abundance, but not very large. They were eaten everywhere, at almost all times and places, in the same manner as other people eat raw apples, and with as much manifest relish.

The gooseberries, apples, cherries, and cranberries which I saw were none of them tempting enough in appearance to induce me to try them, and if used at all, it is only to a very limited extent, and in the form of conserves. The only fruit I remember to have seen eaten uncooked, as I have said, was the wild strawberry. These

## Prisoners of Russia

were fairly sweet, of good flavour, and were eaten largely with or without cream—with it by those who had it, without it by others who generally used a little sugar only.

The cultivated portions of land were generally of small area, and far apart. The general appearance of the soil gave me the impression that it was clayey and poor. Nowhere did I see the smallest patch of land which looked dark, rich, and fertile.

So far as I could discover, such a thing as fertilizing is never thought of by the occupiers of the land. The Bureau of Agriculture has a thoroughly trained and scientific officer at its head, who told me that, although no question of that kind escapes his consideration, he has perpetually to be struggling between limited resources and the sluggish stupidity of the convict cultivators.

It is certainly not in the quality of the soil as I saw it, that an argument could have been found for the colonization of this island, yet I am bound to admit that I have seen other places with a soil not much better which have been colonized with great ultimate success. Of this it would be difficult to mention instances more conspicuous than some parts of the New England States. The Pilgrim Fathers who landed on Plymouth Rock had for soil little else than

## Agriculture in Sakhalin

the thin covering of other rocks farther inland, the poverty of the region being ever since historically notorious. Yet the success of the colonization of that region has been quoted as almost beyond parallel.

Very large proportions of Norway and Sweden, and even of Scotland, are but little better suited to agriculture so far as the soil is concerned, and the same might also be said about Newfoundland. In order, therefore, to maintain the alleged impossibility of a successful colonization of Sakhalin, certain reasons must be adduced other than those relating merely to the general poverty of its soil. From what I have seen of the success already attained there, it struck me that stock-raising might be carried on to an extent vastly beyond what has yet been attempted.

Indisputably the real wealth of Sakhalin should be sought in its surrounding waters, in which the fish are perhaps more abundant than in any other waters on the face of the globe, except at some parts of the east coast of Kamchatka.

On the east coast of Sakhalin whales continue to be very numerous, notwithstanding the reports to the contrary which I have seen, while a little farther south throughout the Pérouse Strait, and also up along the coast on the west,

## Prisoners of Russia

salmon-trout and herring are so numerous that at times it has seemed as if it would be impossible to drop a stone overboard without striking some of them. On several occasions I have fished with a net from the little wooden pier at Korsakoffsk, and had it fairly well filled as fast as I could haul it up and lower it again.

Right in sight of the eastern shore large-sized steamers from distant countries can be seen reaping rich harvests of whale and other fish, while the officials stationed there as residents simply look on, contenting themselves with merely taking catches enough for the present and winter use of their immediate locality, including the supply for the draught dogs, which eat nothing but fish all the year round. It seemed to me that, if properly organized, fisheries should be made the staple industry of the colony, and that properly treated fish food might not only more largely take the place of the meat used on the island, but that it might also yield a large direct revenue to the Imperial Government.

If the colonists were free Japanese, instead of Russian convicts, this fishing industry alone would certainly not only make the island of Sakhalin self-supporting, but financially productive.

In endeavouring to account for this apparent dereliction and oversight, we are at once

## The Fisheries of Sakhalin

confronted with the specific and crucial impediment, which at the very threshold makes impossible any comparison of that which might be achieved by the present Administration in Sakhalin with what might be accomplished under different conditions; with that which has been and is accomplished in other countries under natural conditions still less favourable.

Between convict-labour conditions and free-labour conditions it is impossible in any respect to institute fair comparisons. To put convicts to deep-sea fishing would be to give them wings, though only of canvas, and with these wings they might fly to other lands, not within the original intention when they were sentenced to Sakhalin. This factor, which is integral, must, I fear, for the present at least, be fatal to the use and development of this, the most valuable of the natural resources pertaining to this island.

From personal inspection combined with further information from resident officials on the island, my impressions are that, with a fine population, Sakhalin might become not only self-sustaining, but might be made to yield a moderate net revenue of profit to the Imperial Government. During the penal colony period, on the contrary, Sakhalin will scarcely fail to have annual deficits to be met by the imperial exchequer. Rapid and complete would be its

## Prisoners of Russia

progress on the substitution or addition of free emigrant labour on a large scale.

From what I saw in Sakhalin, it is my impression that from a purely commercial stand-point it would have been for the moment cheaper for the Government if the larger number of the convicts now there had been hanged where and when they were convicted, as they would have been, say, in England. As the civil judiciary in Russia, however, does not pretend to the divine right of official killing, the Crown substitutes the more immediately expensive method of treatment, securing absolute sequestration of the criminal from general society, combined with continuous freedom for reformation, while his life shall last.

Regarding the primary purpose of Sakhalin, its success cannot be questioned. The isolation of the convict murderers from society, and of society from them, is perhaps as complete as if the convicts had been hanged. The security of the coast-line enables the officials to allow more freedom of physical exercise, while the road-making and development of the natural resources of the island provide useful occupation. The climate is upon the whole healthy; and as for moral reformation, there is nothing to prevent it. In all cases the temptations to repetition of crime are practically at a minimum.

## CHAPTER XIX

### A GENERAL VIEW OF THE SIBERIAN PENAL SYSTEM—ITS AIM

ANY person standing on the pinnacle of Anglo-American twentieth-century civilization, and looking down from this lofty height upon the outside of the Siberian exile system, hoping thence to form true conceptions and to make just criticisms of that system, is morally certain to fail in both respects. It is only as we approach this question from the inside, and from the Russian standpoint, that we may hope to succeed in either of them.

In order that we may comprehend this subject in its evolution, adaptation, development, and final products, let us first look at the conditions out of which it arose.

Accustomed as we are to the important position now occupied by Russia among the great powers, it is difficult to keep in mind that as a civilized nation she is yet only in her infancy; that only a little more than nine hundred years ago her Emperor (Vladimir) was notorious for

## Prisoners of Russia

his wholesale human sacrifices to his god Peroun.

In the seventeenth century the monarchs of the greater powers of Europe thought little more of the Czar of Russia than we think of an African potentate, and so late as 1735 it was possible for Lord Bolingbroke, in his Letters on History, to write as he did that "the history of the Muscovites has no relation to the knowledge which a practical English statesman ought to acquire."

In the year 1700 the present capital of this Empire had no existence whatever, and the land on which it was decided to erect it had but just before belonged to a foreign power. Yet this was the first port through which European civilization could begin to enter the Empire.

The recognition of Russia by the great powers as one of their number did not occur until so late as 1814, when the Emperor Alexander, at the head of his troops, marched into Paris as one of the allied conquerors.

The present so-called civilization in Russia is not of Russia. It is yet new. It is foreign. It has never yet become amalgamated into the life of the masses throughout the Empire. Unlike some other nations, Japan for example, she never, during a long period

## The Siberian Penal System

of isolation, wrought out anything of her own worthy of being called a Russian civilization.

One sufficient cause of this, and one deserving special attention because it was one of the root causes also of the Siberian exile system itself, is, in fact, that up to the close of the sixteenth century the whole country was under the blight and curse of nomadism. The Tartar invasions were not by armies merely. They consisted in movements of whole tribes and their belongings, and these were so frequent, and so devastating, that slaughter by fire, famine, and sword came to be almost as general and as periodic as the ebbing and flowing of the resistless tides.

The first general change towards stability was effected by Boris Godunoff, by whose edict, issued on the 24th of November, 1597, every peasant was forbidden to leave the land on which that date found him. By this act, which nailed the peasant to the soil and made him inseparable from it, was initiated the system of serfdom which continued up to our own times.

Our first acquaintance with Siberia dates from about 1545, when Yermak Tinofief, at the head of one of the Tartar hordes, to escape from the hopeless crash of the fire-arms Ivan the Ter-

## Prisoners of Russia

rible first brought against them, fled across the Volga and built a fort on the banks of the Irtish, on the site of a native village called "Siberia," since when all the territory beyond the Urals has been called Siberia.

After Yermak Tinofief had gallantly presented this whole territory to the Czar, the wonderful fertility and mineral richness of the region caused such an inrush of immigrants that within about ninety-five years were founded the towns of Tobolsk, Tomsk, Yakutsk, Irkutsk, and even that of Okhotsk, on the extreme eastern coast, on the shores of the Okhotsk Sea.

In return for his gallant generosity the Tartar chief and his tribe were installed by the Czar as administrators of the whole territory.

When Peter the Great came to the throne, he found that under these Tartar administrators, with their incorrigible nomadic character, a relapse had occurred so general and great that the whole territory of Siberia threatened to relapse and become merely a useless geographical expression. He saw that the only solution of the problem lay in colonization. The indispensable factor was population. Throughout Russia proper the people under the laws of serfdom were immovable. To get a population fixed in a land where the restraints of serfdom were un-

## The Siberian Penal System

known, and which was entirely free, his first experiment was to export thither men of other than Tartar race, yet who were under imperial control. Swedish prisoners of war were sent there by the thousands. Afterward Russians who, being prisoners, were under imperial control, were also sent in large numbers. Thus it was hoped to secure in Siberia the same fixed population which in Russia had been successfully obtained by serfdom.

It will thus be seen that the first cause of the present Siberian exile system was Tartaric nomadism. The motive was and is colonization. The object was and is imperial development and extension by growth.

Simultaneously with forced colonization in Siberia, there has always been vigorously prosecuted a system of state-aided free emigration, with inducements so liberal that, under a system whose workings the author has witnessed with considerable admiration, many thousands of free persons go every year from Russia to Siberia, with as much enthusiasm as the thousands of immigrants start from New York for the more western States of America. The author has seen one depot capable of lodging five thousand of these emigrants *en route*.

It is unnecessary to say that in the prosecu-

## Prisoners of Russia

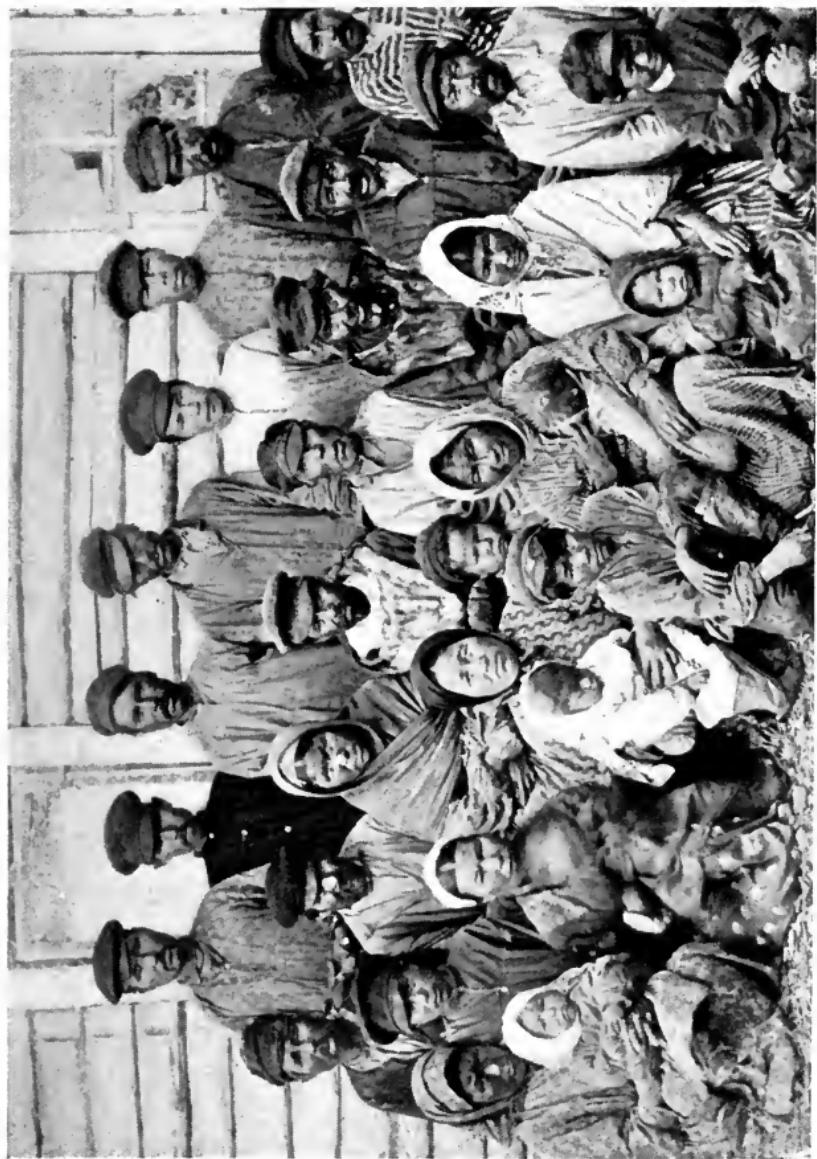
tion of Siberian colonization by the Russian Government, the forced colonization by prisoners is its principal reliance.

The principles of the Siberian and Sakhalin exile system may all be expressed in one sentence, viz.:

The utilization of the prisoner for the highest good of the state.

Although simple, this statement of the case will be found to be completely comprehensive. The system pretends to no more than that, and attempts no less. The state does not seek to punish the prisoner, but to profit by him. The segregation of the prisoner to the service of the state implies protection of society from the criminal. Getting the best out of the prisoner of which he is capable, implies, as in using a horse, that the prisoner is kept in fit condition for it.

The production by the prisoner of his best possible output for the state, implies, according to the nature of his being, proportionately good results, both physical and moral, in himself and to himself, so that, even though he be innocent of the alleged crime, he at least may maintain his self-respect. Though the work at which he is put be dictated not by his special skill, but by a special need of the state, he may still be consoled by the fact that he is at least serving his



A group of Sakhalin miners and their families.



## The Siberian Penal System

country, and, as Dostoyefsky says, "those who shall come after him."

In accordance with the general imperial policy as described, the minute the prisoner arrives at his Siberian destination, he is asked what he can do best. If there is no pressing reason to the contrary, he is at once employed accordingly. If he has no special skill, he is put to such work as the settlement most needs. Or, if the prisoner shows special capacity, he may be put under training in one of the prison shops as an apprentice. If during his probationary prison period he has commended himself, he is not only allowed to do the best he can for himself outside the prison under mild surveillance, but, to get started, may receive temporary help from the officials, subject to reimbursement at fixed rates. This especially applies to agricultural labourers, who receive allotments of land, clothes, rations, implements, cattle, seed, etc., for two years. This is done systematically by the state, not for the good of the prisoner, but for its own benefit.

Scattered throughout Siberia, in its towns and cities, are scores of millionaires, the results of that system, and the more of these the better the Government likes it, because this all reacts to the benefit of the state. A judge in St. Petersburg or Moscow, looking at exile from

## Prisoners of Russia

this point of view, feels very little compunction, when sentencing a prisoner for a second or third offence, in sending him to Siberia, knowing that he is probably doing thus the best possible thing for the prisoner, and at the same time is saving society from one who would otherwise become a habitual criminal. The judge knows that if the prisoner, as an exile in Siberia, does not ultimately make the most of himself, it will in all probability be his own fault. It is a well-known fact that when finally the famous Decembrists received a full pardon, more than two thirds of their number elected to stay in Siberia as their permanent home.

Under this system the Russian Government does not waste even its murderers, but, like a wise sanitary engineer in dealing with sewage, protects society against them by removing them, and then utilizing them, so that, instead of loss, the state gets an actual profit. That there is punishment to the prisoner from first to last, integral to his segregation, is inevitable, but it is incidental. The effect upon the prisoner, knowing as he does that this punishment is of his own procuring, produces regret rather than resentment. If he chooses to commit fresh crimes, he knows that he may be flogged as English boys are flogged at Eton. Further, it must be admitted, this system includes no

## The Siberian Penal System

ostensible pretences to the reformation of the prisoner. It simply puts him in conditions which are favourable to it. Mental, moral, religious improvement, in the case of the prisoner as in that of the free citizen, is regarded as his own affair.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE ANGLO-AMERICAN AND SIBERIAN PENAL SYSTEMS—CONTRASTS

THE principles of the penal systems of England and America are, in every particular, in direct contrast to those of the Siberian system.

These principles are expressed in one word; that word is *Punishment*. This is the one motive, the one object. Worse still is the fact, that the means adopted to secure this end cause from the very first, and at every step, the degradation and damage of the individual.

With an extravagance which disregards cost, with only a few discredited exceptions, as at Elmira, the structure, diet, occupation in prisons, are all adapted to this one end. The first step being to make the prisoner a useless creature, the next is to compel him to regard himself as such.

This principle of punishment, urged with a conscientiousness which gains force from its theological source, is not wholly divorced from sentiment. For while in practice its first effect

## The Anglo-American Penal System

is to extinguish all humanity in the prisoner, the prison *régime* always includes compulsory religious services, ostensibly for his salvation.

In England, where the state includes what is called "the Church," and every prison has a chaplain of that Church who holds "compulsory" daily services, the treatment of every hard-labour convict in every model convict prison may, I think, be sufficient to illustrate my general contention. In these, the best prisons of the latest model type in either country, the convict who, on entering, is converted into a numeral, is for the first nine months in all cases put into confinement so absolutely solitary that up to the end of that period he may perhaps not have once heard the sound of his own voice. Utterly regardless of trade, personal manual skill, or previous training, the occupation assigned to each is exactly the same for all. It consists in turning a self-recording iron crank in his cell up to a stated number of revolutions, the screw being put on by the warden, according to the desired hardness. The prisoner is carefully made to understand that this crank turns nothing, that it is for punishment. An alternative punishment to this is the bread wheel. This means six hours a day in a solitary compartment, the inclined floor of which is a revolving wheel—a misstep of the prisoner being at his

## Prisoners of Russia

own peril. The prisoner is made to know that this wheel turns nothing, that it is exclusively for punishment. It is not improbable that this routine might be continued unbroken for years, or for life.

Another form of hard labour, which, being milder, is given to women and is used more than any other, is "oakum picking." Old tar rope-ends as hard as wood have to be reduced to their original fibre with the fingers alone. This labour would seem to have a use, but the prisoner knows that the material is, at the end of his labour on it, sold for less than was paid for it at the beginning; that the work is exclusively for punishment.

The prisoner is not compelled to go once a day to his solitary cell in church, but for a refusal he receives a bad mark which is equivalent to a prolongation of his term. Take the original ground plans of all the prisons in England, and not in one of them, even the latest and best, will be found structural provision for a single school-room or a single workshop other than for domestic requirement. Nor is there any financial provision for the employment of a single outside mechanical instructor. While recently watching the working of the tread-wheel in a cathedral city, the author asked a question of the prison governor, who replied, "Yes, our wheel

## The Anglo-American Penal System

used to pump the water and supply the whole prison, but the beggars found it out and didn't mind it so much, so now we pay the water company for our water. We want these chaps to know what they are here for is punishment. The country can afford it, and, so far as I am concerned, I'll see that they shall have it."

Thus it comes to pass that, whereas the majority of all the prisoners up to the time of their arrest were maintaining themselves and families, from the moment of their conviction the country spends about five hundred thousand dollars a year on their maintenance in idleness, for the pious luxury of giving them their punishment. The Spaniards, who maintain their bulls, at least see the sport, but the British public is more easily satisfied; the punishment is solitary.

It is true that, to allay some public discontent, since the report of Mr. Herbert Gladstone's committee, some amateur experiments by wardens have been allowed in the employment of some prisoners in making goods for the War and Post Office Departments, that a subordinate official has ostentatiously been denominated as Chief of the Department of Industries, and that for this the prison commissioners have claimed excellent success. A very unsatisfactory evidence of this so-called success is found in the fact

## Prisoners of Russia

that, whereas in 1896 the net cost of prisoners in prison was a little over £22 per head, it was in 1897, at the period of this alleged manufacturing success, over and above earnings, £22 6s. 8d., showing a loss rather than a saving in the general result. Even in these more recent efforts, as in all others previously made, the question has never been how to help, or to make the men do the best of which they are capable. On the contrary, the labour selected has always been that of the very lowest grade obtainable, and for all prisoners in common.

In evidence on these points from the nearest and highest official authority, the following short quotations are made from the Annual Official Reports of the Superintendent of the State Prisons of the State of New York during the period of the productive labour experiments:

In 1878: "The increase of industries and profitable forms of labour I regard as the principal cause of the improvement in the moral and physical condition of the prisoners as compared with the time when there was idleness."

In 1879: "The number of recommitals is now much less than is generally supposed and is now gradually decreasing. . . . It is known that many who have learned within the prison how to maintain themselves by industries have

# The Anglo-American Penal System

abandoned their criminal careers in favour of honest employments."

In 1883: "What is demonstrated is: First, the productive energy and capacity of the prisoners are constantly increasing. An enormous deficit has been changed to a surplus of over \$54,000. Second, the physical and moral condition of the prisoners is steadily improving.

"Third. The number of prisoners is gradually diminishing, although the population of the State is increasing.

"Fourth. The discipline is more thorough and easily maintained, with fewer punishments and penalties.

"Fifth. The deterrent and corrective potency of imprisonment is visibly augmented."

In 1884: "Surplus, \$9,106.23. The morale makes discipline easy. Of 1,522 prisoners, only 8 were locked up for refractoriness, and not one for more than a day or two. The physician says that the prisoners feel the play of moral forces. They have increased self-respect. Their obedience is cheerful and voluntary, their physical condition is most satisfactory. The progress during the past eight years has been beyond parallel in this State, and during the past fiscal year the greatest ever known. The increase in population has been 15 per cent, the decrease in convicts 19 per cent."

## Prisoners of Russia

In 1885: "The amount of productive industry has been in excess of any previous year. (Surplus, \$73,002.31 for Sing Sing.) Not for many years has there been so small a percentage of punishment for breach of discipline."

In 1886: Surplus, Sing Sing, \$75,066.22; for whole State, \$33,647. "It is an incontrovertible fact that it worked out grand results. It fulfilled every requisite in prison administration. It changed a large annual deficit into a surplus. It secured a high state of discipline, health, morale in the prison population."

In 1888: Prison industries were abolished.

In 1889: Deficit, \$369,274.25. "The convicts are immeasurably worse off at present than when they could earn their living. After this grand, good, physical, financial, and moral demonstration of the value of systematic labour, the position was abandoned. The fiscal balance was changed from surplus to deficit. In this the criminals were deprived of the most regenerating remedy prison reformers ever found."

In 1891: "Without productive labour there can be no reformation of criminals."

The systems in the United States and in England are practically the same, each by similar methods seeking two ends—the punishment of the prisoners, and the protection of the public. Throughout the United States, partly in

## The Anglo-American Penal System

consequence of the dominance of the same principle as in England, and partly through the political influence of rich manufacturers, imprisonment implies forced pauperization of the prisoner while in prison, and through this secures disqualification, physically and morally, for everything but pauperism for the rest of his life after his discharge. That this artificial, unnatural and unjust condition of things is not, as is sometimes alleged in excuse for it, an unavoidable one in the treatment of convicts, has been amply proved by the few and fitful experiments in the more natural and just methods of self-maintenance, and the success which has attended them not only in the United States, but more especially in Germany, as well as in other countries, including India and Japan, as witnessed by the author.

From 1881 to 1886 an experiment of this character was made in New York State with this result, that, after paying all gross costs of all the State prisons, hospitals, and lunatic asylums, there was a net profit to the State for that period of \$33,647.44. In 1886 the net profits to the State, after paying all gross costs of maintenance, were \$75,066.22 from Sing Sing prison alone.

For every year during that period the warden of every one of these prisons reported a cor-

## Prisoners of Russia

responding improvement in the physical health, discipline, and moral tone of its inmates. In spite of these incontrovertible facts, in consequence of subsequent political influence of the kind I have mentioned, all this was stopped, the entire system reversed, and the deficit which the ratepayers had to meet in 1897 was, for Sing Sing alone, \$174,098.71; and for the whole State, \$561,376.27. What were the moral results of this change? The report of the State Superintendent of Prisons, William A. Lathrop, says:

“The reports of wardens, physicians, and chaplains show that the moral and sanitary condition of the prison population culminated in the period when productive work was most regular.” But, under the later and present methods, the annual State reports have been of an exactly opposite character. In that of 1888 the Superintendent says, among his conclusions, “without productive labour there can be no reformation of criminals. . . . For such physical, mental, and moral well-being as is attainable in prison the continuous employment at labour of prisoners is necessary.” In 1891 the warden of Clinton Prison reported that under the later conditions of forced idleness or labour of an unproductive character, “it required tact and patience to avert unpleasant consequences.”

# The Siberian Penal System

Bad health, debased morals, more frequent insanity, and sometimes suicide, are quoted as recognised and direct results of a return to the punishment policy at the money cost above stated.

## THESE PRINCIPLES AND SYSTEMS TESTED BY THEIR RESULTS AND PRODUCTS

It will be observed that the author has not attempted to deny the alleged cruelties incident to the Siberian exile system due to maladministration. To have done so would have meant endless and fruitless disputation. Knowing how much in all the public departments the Russian official has shown a genius for maladministration, knowing from personal observation the difficulties and dangers which even in well-equipped armies attend the movements of large bodies of men over long distances, familiar with the isolation, the necessary absolutism which has pertained to Siberian penal colonization, the author repeats, what he has previously admitted, that at one time or another almost anything may have been possible. Much that was unavoidable, such as even in free conditions marked the frightful history of the earlier colonization of California and the far western American States, may have happened; much may have been due to official neglect, wanton-

## Prisoners of Russia

ness, greed, and despotism, resulting in an incalculable aggregate of human suffering. For the sake of the argument let us admit that all the past allegations of cruelty, including those made by dramatists, novelists, poets, convicts, exiles, and travellers, are true, every word of them. The contention of the author, however, is that these things, so far as true, have been incidents arising from the maladministration of the system. They have formed no integral part of that system itself. It was not for these cruelties that the system existed. They must be regarded as accidents arising out of conditions which happily are improving and can never be repeated in like proportions. Thus much for the principles of the Siberian system, about which there can be no dispute, and for any of the principles of the English and American systems, about which also there can be no dispute. Let us inquire now into the main results of these respective principles. We have examined the trees, let us now look at the fruits they have yielded.

One of the net products of the Siberian system first mentionable is Sakhalin itself, the subject of this book.

So late as 1850 it was so little known that a British map made it a promontory. This island, which is as long as England, and which in 1875 was without an acre of cultivation, has

## The Siberian Penal System

by this system been redeemed from barbarism, has its imports not only, but its exports; its Christian churches, its clergy, with an archimandrite at their head. During 1890 and in 1896 the author saw not only specimens of its various new products, but a variety of finished manufactures, including ornamental wrought-iron work, and inlaid cabinet work, equal to much that is made in Paris. All this within twenty years of its coming exclusively under the Siberian exile system.

Of all the achievements of this twentieth century, that which has perhaps most excited the surprise, admiration, and envy of the other nations of Europe, has been the Trans-Siberian Railway, the mere prestige of which, even in advance of its completion, enabled Russia to assume an unlooked-for domination in the farther Orient.

It has been previously shown how the colonization of Siberia was possible in no other way but by the Siberian exile system. It may now be pointed out that it was only by means of the preliminary colonization by this system that the building, maintenance, and working of this road could possibly have been made practicable.

Hence, the Trans-Siberian Railroad itself, and the imperial territorial extension recently

## Prisoners of Russia

incident to it, may fairly be adduced as the products of the Siberian exile system.

It is further worthy of note that this unequalled area of Siberia, with its numerous aboriginal tribes, has from the beginning and until now been held and kept intact without the loss of one imperial soldier by war. Bearing in mind the extent and steady extension of this territory, this fact may be regarded as one entirely without parallel. It is not too much to say that this fact also has been largely due to the Siberian exile system, and to the noiseless, quiet way in which the penal colonies have occupied the land they had, and crept forward, absorbing that which lay next beyond.

### THE AFTER RESULTS AND PRODUCTS OF THE PRINCIPLES IN THE AMERICAN AND ENGLISH PENAL SYSTEMS

Taking Sing Sing Prison, New York, as one of the very highest repute of its type in any part of the United States, it has been shown that its most conspicuous product was for the year 1897 a deficit for the ratepayer of \$174,098.71, while for the whole State of New York there was a deficit of \$516,376.27 as the cost of punishment, with not a single pleasing product to which we can point as an offset.

This deficit is but the first cost of punish-

## The Anglo-American Penal System

ment. It is computed that the ex-prisoners—who, by the perniciousness of the prison system, have, after their first discharge, become habitual paupers or criminals—directly or indirectly cost the State, when out of prison, about eight times as much as their maintenance when in prison; and that this annual outside cost is yearly increasing is officially acknowledged.

This is a black picture, yet beyond it, but for the few reformations which do not come under our category, there is no other product to which we can point in return for the prodigious outlay on organized human torture.

In England, under these principles, the first conspicuous product is again a corresponding deficit, the annual net cost of punishing. This averages about £500,000 per annum. This is the first cost for maintaining about 20,000 prisoners in prison. The next larger and much more significant product is a deficit cost of about four millions sterling. This is what it costs to look after the 21,000 graduates from the prisons, known as habitual criminals. Such is the certainty of the moral degradation from the first imprisonment, that a parliamentary report of 1895 states as follows:

“The proportion of reconvictions during the past twenty years has constantly increased. Of those convicted a second time 48 per cent re-

## Prisoners of Russia

turn again; a third time, 64 per cent; a fifth, 79 per cent, and the old offender is constantly returning."

The author himself was in one prison in which one prisoner was serving his two hundred and eightieth sentence, and in another where a prisoner was serving his three hundred and fifty-seventh term of imprisonment.

The total deficit to the Government on account of criminals is estimated at ten millions sterling per annum.

The reformatories cost rather less per head than the prisons. Of those discharged from the reformatories only about 14 per cent ever relapse. Of those discharged from the prisons, more than 50 per cent of the whole number become habitual criminals, and never again rise above that condition. It is this habitual criminal class which is of all others the worst direct product of this prison punishment system, and which presents one of the most difficult problems with which the nation has to deal. This holds in both countries, England and America alike. It should excite no surprise, however, as this is exactly the result for which the whole system is adapted. Convert a man into a wild beast—when released his only resource is plunder.

After a careful inspection of these systems

## The Anglo-American Penal System

where they are practised, should the author venture upon stating his impressions he would say, that in America and in England, but perhaps in England more especially, the administration is remarkably good, the principles outrageously inhuman and bad. In the Siberian system the administration has rarely been good and frequently has been outrageously bad, but as regards the general principles of the Siberian system; they are in accordance with the constitution of man, of laws both natural and revealed, and are therefore exceedingly good; and the respective results go to establish this conclusion.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE UNIVERSAL APPLICATION OF THE SIBERIAN SYSTEM

ALTHOUGH the facts submitted show that, upon the whole and in the long run, the Siberian exile system has been working out incalculable advantage to the Russian Empire, and that, through the quicker transit across the world, the Siberian Railway resulting from this system is conferring a promised boon to all the nations and peoples of the world, it may easily be retorted in defence of the contrasting uselessness, damage, and waste from other penal systems, that the other countries have no Siberia.

This retort rather augments than diminishes the credit due to the principle under consideration, for in no other country can a problem so formidable as was the Siberian problem be encountered in the application of those principles.

The principle under consideration, which is universal in its application, is much easier of execution within areas smaller and more accessible. The methods by which the principle may

## Siberian System Universally Applied

be best carried out in one country are not for imitation by any other country. Nor are the methods of to-day the best methods for to-morrow.

The history of imitations of penal methods, different countries trying to follow each other, has been a history of mistakes. The great need has been a central principle of universal application. This principle is here presented. The methods of its application must be evolved from the local conditions in each case.

Unity of principle, diversity of application according to local requirement, is the only condition of successful solution of the general penal problem.

As examples which have come under the observation of the author at different times may be mentioned, the penal farm lands in Yezo, Japan, the carpet factories in India, the agricultural industries in Holland, the iron and other industries in Moscow, the thirty-three separate trades in one prison in Germany, the twenty-two trades in operation in one prison in Belgium, and even the scavenging work in Havana.

In all these institutions the methods, though so diverse, offer illustrations of the best local expression of the common principle of the utilization of the prison for the highest good of the state, even though the officials concerned were

## Prisoners of Russia

in many cases unconscious of the formula as here expressed.

As preliminary to all considerations for the prevention of crime or the treatment of criminals, it is important that we cease to think of them as a separate and different class of beings, but regard each prisoner as a person who is one of ourselves.

Through the public schools, or otherwise, everybody should in advance know that it is a primary penal principle that whoever elects to commit a crime must pay for it, and that the personal earnings prior to release must at least cover the cost of arrest, conviction, and maintenance. As a general basis of punishment this would be easily understood, the equity of it would promote general respect for the laws, and the warning would be both wholesome and timely for the prevention of first offences.

No able-bodied prisoner should have anything which he has not earned. Every prison should be a place in which the prisoner sent to it can best serve some present need of the state, or can be made to yield to the state the largest net earnings of which he is, or can be made to be, capable.

All prisoners who by a given number of convictions have proved their incapacity for useful citizenship unaided, should on further convic-

## Siberian System Universally Applied

tion be appropriated by the state for life, under forced labour conditions of mutual advantage.

The punishment in this system would be in the personal loss of liberty, the personal loss of net earnings.

Its advantage to the state would be that, instead of a financial loss, the prisons would be a source of net profit for the relief of poor rate-payers. The habitual drunkard and the habitual professional criminal as a class would cease to exist.

The advantage to the prisoner would be that, even though he might have been wrongly convicted, there would be nothing in the life morally degrading, and on proof of his innocence his net earnings should be paid to him. If guilty, his time would be spent in doing the most and best of which he was manually capable for the state, so that on release he would have the surest basis from which to proceed to do the most and best of which he was capable for himself.

Moreover, leaving prison as he would, with the feeling that he had compensated the state and had completely expiated, he could start again on an honest, self-respecting basis, without the self-contempt, resentment, or revenge engendered by unproductive and degrading toil devised for punishment, but felt as torture.

## Prisoners of Russia

All the statistics in America and in England show that the model punishment system does not prevent crime, but, by first of all degrading the criminal, multiplies, intensifies, and perpetuates it, and so does harm, and only harm and incurable harm, to everybody concerned.

By contrast, the proposed penal system based on the principle of compensation, by dealing with the prisoner from first to last as a fellow-man, with manifest reasonableness, and solely in equity to the prisoner, would, in the whole course of treatment, be integrally strengthening and elevating. To have served a term in prison, instead of being a permanent disqualification, would be rather a guarantee, at the least, of fitness for self-maintenance. The discharge would be on terms honourable to the prisoner, who would have a fair prospect of a return to good citizenship.

As regards prevention, correction, and future guarantee, this system of punishment by forced compensation, in direct contrast to that now in use, promises good and only good to everybody concerned, bringing benefit to the individual prisoner and profit to the state.

## CHAPTER XXII

### FROM SAKHALIN TO YEZO

OWING to the approach of winter, my time for the special studies I have recounted had almost expired. I still adhered to my original intention of crossing the Straits of La Pérouse, striking the most northerly point of Yezo at Cape Soya, and thence traversing the entire length of Yezo and of the Japanese Empire, from the extreme north, finishing at Nagasaki. Cape Soya is scarcely farther from Korsakoffsk than Calais is from Dover. Never was "so near and yet so far" more literally illustrated. Owing to the dangerous nature of these waters and neighbouring coasts, as I have described them in the Geography of Sakhalin, I found it impossible to find anybody who would undertake to convey me across this channel. That this universal refusal to make the attempt was quite justifiable, is more apparent to me now that I have read the description of the opposite coast by Mr. W. S. Landor, whom I afterward met at Hakodate. Curiously enough, it seems that at

## Prisoners of Russia

the very time I was trying to cross from Sakhalin he was making equally futile efforts to cross the channel from the opposite direction.

In his book, *Alone with the Hairy Ainu*, published some time after my own *Life with Trans-Siberian Savages*, he says, in speaking of this region on the opposite coast:

“For thirty or forty miles as far as the Teshiwo River the beach was strewn with wrecks and wreckage. Here you saw a boat smashed to pieces; there a mast on the shore; further on a wheel-house washed away by the waves; then, the helm of a disabled ship. It was a sight sad enough to break one’s heart with all the tragic circumstances it suggested. Between Bakkai and Wadamanai especially, I do not think one can go more than a few yards at a time without being reminded, by wreckage which is strewn thick on the coast, of some calamity. A white life-boat, with her stern smashed, lay on the sand helpless to save and as a kind of satire on her name; and at Wadamanai a large Russian cruiser, the Crisorot, dismasted and broken in two, lay flat on the beach half covered with sand. Her bridge had been washed away and her deck had sunk in. Some of the bodies of her gallant officers and crew had been washed ashore by the sea. No one knows in what circumstances the ship was lost, but it is probable that during

## From Sakhalin to Yezo

the last winter when she came to her ill-fated end, her rigging and sails got top-heavy with ice and that she capsized. Some of the wreckage one finds on that coast has been drifted there from the Chinese Sea by the Kuroshiba current; and then, owing to La Pérouse Strait turning so sharply to the east, has been left on this last portion of the coast. Here and there a rough tent made with a torn sail, or a deserted shed knocked up out of pieces of wreckage, is a suggestive reminder that some unfortunate derelict seafarer had suffered and striven for life on these forlorn sands. An enormous quantity of drift logs and here and there some bones of whales are strewn all along the beach."

After speaking of the loss of the Ertogroul in a typhoon near Yokohama, he says:

"Let us return to Cape Soya, where we have left the wreck. The rapid current which comes through the strait gives a horrid look to the water, and I have never seen the sea look so vicious. The natives of the small Soya village told me *that it is impossible to cross over to Sakhalin*, the high mountains of which, covered with snow and glaciers, I could see distinctly. [These were not visible to persons in Sakhalin.] The distance from land to land is about twenty-eight miles, but no small boat can get across without being swamped. They told me also

## Prisoners of Russia

that often dead bodies of Russians are washed ashore, probably unfortunate convicts who found their death in attempting to obtain liberty. H. M. S. Rattler was wrecked in 1868 on one of the numerous reefs near this cape, so the record of Soya could hardly be more mournful. In the winter time this bay is completely blocked with ice, but the strait itself is never entirely frozen owing to the strong warm current from the Chinese Sea, which the Japanese call by the name of Kuro-shiwa.

"It is from this point that one gets the first view of Soya Cape. Going round a bay one passes a few fishermen's houses, and on the cliffs above them has been erected the Silensi lighthouse. I cleared the cape and rounded the bay on the other side, where I saw another wreck of a sailing ship dashed upon the rocks, making the scene a sad one. I still went on, and went round two or three smaller headlands, when the melancholy sight stood before me. This last ship had her stern out of the waters, and a Turkish name was painted on it. Her appearance also was Turkish, and I was more than once puzzled as to what a Turkish ship could have been doing in La Pérouse Strait. . . . The mission of the ship in those far-off seas was a mysterious one. No one ever

## From Sakhalin to Yezo

knew exactly whence she came or whither she was bound."

The notion that from the shortness of the distance on the map I could cross these straits if necessary in a rowboat just as I had once crossed the English Channel from Boulogne to Dover, I found to be quite fallacious, and to my great annoyance this plan had to be given up. It was known that there were two Japanese sailing vessels off Kamchatka, collecting the fish and the Japanese fishermen at the close of the season, in order to take them home either to Yezo or Nigata. Though no European had ever been known to travel in one of these vessels, it was thought that, if I chose to rough it in that way, the Governor might make arrangements with one of them for me, when, as under existing treaty they were bound to do, they called *en route* at Korsakoffsk to make a report of their cargo.

I had not then learned—nor would it have mattered much, I suppose, if I had—that in addition to the other dangers for sailing vessels in this region, the typhoons, which at a certain season of the year sweep the eastern coast of Japan, have an awkward way of sometimes ignoring the limits assigned them on the charts, and continuing in their destructive course right up into the Gulf of Tartary and the Okhotsk

## Prisoners of Russia

Sea. Further, I was quite ignorant of the fact that the typhoon season was just then approaching its climax.

The expected Japanese brig, Kaoon Mara, at last arrived in the bay off Korsakoffsk, having on board Matsui Kaze Sau (whose name rendered into English means The Song of the Wind through Pine Trees), Gobo Sau (Five Islands), who was the captain, and, what I appreciated more than all perhaps, an interpreter named Wakasumi Sau, who, though employed for his knowledge of Russian, spoke also a little English.

Matsui Sau agreed with the greatest pleasure to take me to Hakodate on the Kaoon Mara, and after a round of festivities in my honour by my generous Russian friends, the Governor and his staff took me aboard in the launch about ten o'clock the next night, that I might be ready for the proposed start at daybreak.

As they steamed back, the torches on the Kaoon Mara revealed, on the one hand, the waving of handkerchiefs of my receding friends, and on the other the forms of nearly a hundred of my fellow-passengers swarming over the little deck, all Japanese fishermen, quite naked except for their loin-cloths. The contrast to the festivities and friends I had just left was strange, striking, and weird, the scene being strongly



Matsui Sau and Dr. Howard.



## From Sakhalin to Yezo

suggestive of the deck of an African slave ship.

The little deck cabin, at the door of which I was requested to leave my shoes, was, in true Japanese fashion, covered with matting spotlessly clean. Excepting the little hibachi, or stove, it was entirely without furniture, and quite free from the ordinary ship odour. Here Matsui and his friends, in their simple way, received me as courteously as if I had been a foreign potentate. After the usual tea drinking in my honour, and a good deal of bowing all around, Matsui kindly lent me a new Japanese kimono, or robe, for my use while on board, and in the morning I woke up a Japanese. The deck passengers, the savages of the previous night, were all fishermen from Yezo, which is to Japan what Scotland is to England. They were about twice the size of the more southern Japanese, magnificently formed, hardy, brave, thoroughly independent, and as courteous as princes. Their polar fishing season was over, and as they were on their way home for the winter they were in the best of spirits and afforded me a constant source of interest. As many of these men had hardly seen a European before, I was equally a curiosity to them, and if it is not presumptuous I think I may say that all round I was treated as a sort of royal pet on the ship. As for Mat-

## Prisoners of Russia

sui, rich merchant though he was, he insisted on my having all my meals apart, as if I were a Daimio, and he himself, as his particular right, prepared and served me with almost everything I ate.

Soon after starting the wind became so calm that we were flapping and tacking about at a rate of from nothing and less to about two or three knots an hour for two or three days, when we came within sight of a nearly submerged reef, the black, jagged peaks of which jutted here and there above the water along a line about a mile from shore, and which I was told extended parallel to the coast for about sixty miles. The appearance of this reef led me to remark to Wakasumi, the interpreter, "What an ugly place this would be for a sailing ship in a storm!" Indeed, I was so impressed by it that I went so far as to urge the captain to keep farther out to sea and give it a wider birth.

Within two or three hours after this remark, there was a sudden change in the weather. A heavy blow came on from the southeast, which, in view of the coast formation to leeward, was exactly in the most dangerous direction. After dark it increased to a gale. Repeated efforts were made to wear ship, but she would not lay her course. As the ship fell back into the trough of the sea over and over again, the rolling was

## From Sakhalin to Yezo

most violent. Everything movable, both on deck and in the cabin, shared the motion, and when to this was added the general flooding as an accompaniment, I took refuge in my top berth, being able to keep my place in it only by wedging myself on all sides with all my might with head, feet, and elbows. Between ten and twelve the storm developed into a hurricane. Every now and then my good friend Matsui would make his appearance, urge me not to snore, and smilingly say, "Yoroshi, yoroshi" (all right), just to give me encouragement. I didn't believe a word he said, but felt there was no good in making myself uselessly uncomfortable about it. If I got out of the berth, I should be up to my knees in water, and as casks, boxes, and all the deck cargo were playing at nine-pins in the darkness, the chances were I should get my legs broken for my pains. I had seen nothing of the interpreter after the beginning of the storm, and as I was then almost wholly ignorant of Japanese, there was not a soul with whom I was able to exchange a sentence. Added to the roar of the tempest, the cackling, shrieking, and yelling of the frightened Japanese sailors was simply fiendish. Somewhere about four o'clock there was a new sound, and a sudden change in the ship's motion, which, as I surmised, signified that the rudder and steering gear had be-

## Prisoners of Russia

come broken and useless. A heavy sea now deluged me in my berth and threatened to sweep the after-cabin, in which I was, clean away. The faithful Matsui appeared again, but not as before with his cheerful "Yoroshi." This time he himself was stripped of everything but his loin-cloth, in which was a small bundle of what I supposed to be money. Not a word did he utter this time, but with a sad expression he vigorously gesticulated for me to jump from my berth, to strip, and follow him. There was no mistaking what this meant.

I can hardly attempt to describe the sight which presented itself on deck. To portray its awful magnificence and grandeur, words would be almost useless. We were in the midst of a vast sea of seething liquid fire, which broke over us in huge waves and clouds of sparks, while by the cold, bluish spectral light of the luminous spray, each drop of which was a spark, everything and everybody from end to end of the deck was distinctly though dimly visible.

Holding on with all my might, I watched my chances, and between seas crept along the deck under cover of the weather bulwarks to near the deserted wheel, where I lashed myself to a stanchion, and crouched under the bulwarks at the port quarter. Here, between the cabin and the broken wheel, I found most of the men,

## From Sakhalin to Yezo

who, with a turn of a rope round each in succession, formed lines across the quarter-deck, the end of each rope being belayed to a stanchion.

As each particularly huge and blazing wave approached, the man at the weather end of the rope gave the alarm, whereupon the whole row, with a yell, took a firmer grip, and bent their backs to receive it. In the intervals not a word was uttered by any man. The way in which the cackling and shrieking of these men in the presence of mere danger became changed to self-containment, resignation, and silence in the presence of what they now regarded as certain death, struck me at the time, and impresses me now, as sublime.

So vividly was I impressed with the awful magnificence of the scene, that, in order to take in all I could of it before quitting this world forever, I hauled myself up as high as I could, partly loosening my hold so as to get a larger and deeper view of the fiery gulf which yawned beside us as the ship rose upon the crest of a prodigious wave. I said to myself, "This is a sight no man can see and live. In a minute I shall be dead. I must make the most of this last and magnificent opportunity, even at the cost of dying thirty seconds sooner for it."

Whether or not it may seem strange to

## Prisoners of Russia

others I cannot tell, but I remember well that while crouching naked and half dead from cold under the lee of the bulwark, I recalled how, in reading of shipwrecks, the part which had always impressed my imagination the most, was the critical moment when the ship struck bottom. I speculated on the prospects of our doing the same if we kept afloat a little longer, and wondered whether the sensation would correspond to the description. I could not forget the reef I have mentioned, and knowing that, with the gale blowing in that direction, we were probably drifting towards it, I kept watch that way with intense apprehension. Here I observed that, in addition to the violent boiling commotion in all directions, our small horizon was bounded by a more fixed and unbroken wall of liquid fire. This, I felt confident, must be the dreaded reef and must mean our instant destruction.

In a few minutes there was a bump, a crash, and a recoil which caused me to lose my footing entirely, but not my hold. This was repeated three times. The vessel, though it now rolled less, shipped seas heavier, if possible, than before. There had not been a gleam of hope for hours, but if I had indulged in the faintest glimmer now, I should have taken it as a sure sign that I was losing my senses. At this moment

## From Sakhalin to Yezo

the faithful Matsui was beside me, and seeing that I was almost insensible with cold, helped me on with a mackintosh which I had discarded, and brought me a circular life-buoy, the only one on the ship. This I passed over one shoulder and under the other, succeeding with his help in getting it lashed tightly in that position.

At the risk of incurring ridicule, I venture to state here a little bit of experience which I feel it would be cowardly to omit. I noticed that poor Matsui, though perfectly cool, was rubbing his hands together, as Japanese Buddhists do when at prayer. I felt inclined to pray myself, but special answers to special prayer, particularly in cases where the answer wished for was to be a discrimination in favour of the supplicant for some material bestowment, had long ceased to be conspicuous in my religious beliefs. To pray now, therefore, I thought would be cowardly, and in view of the utter helplessness of the situation, I felt it would be hardly fair—that I would therefore rather just face the situation consistently. After a while, however, I came to offering a prayer, a provisional prayer: it was perhaps rather a committal of my soul to God with an appendix, to the effect that if possibly expedient, *we* might, or rather perhaps I should say that I might, in some way survive the present peril. Within two minutes after

## Prisoners of Russia

this I saw Captain Goto rush along the deck between the seas. With heroic effort he succeeded in climbing the foremast, and managed to loosen and shake out the topsail.

As we were lifted up by a huge wave, the wind, catching this sail, made the ship's head pay right round so as to reverse her direction exactly, and, as the wave passed on, we found ourselves carried by it over the reef, her bow heading towards what we thought must be a more or less distant shore. The violence of this movement sprung the mizzen-mast, which went overboard with a crash. By the help of this fore-topsail we were now plainly forging slowly along what was no longer a rocky but a sandy bottom. In this fact came the first gleam of possible hope. Whatever happened now, I felt that my life-buoy might keep me afloat for at least a little while. Directly afterward I saw to the leeward my little Japanese cabin-boy striking out bravely in the trough of the sea. Amid the foam of the waters as they dashed about him his entire form shimmered with light like polished silver, and even the expression of his face was clearly visible.

His position was not much worse than our own, and was what must within a few minutes be the lot of all of us. Yet, after the immense difficulty with which I had just got my life-buoy

## From Sakhalin to Yezo

firmly lashed to me, it was only after a sharp mental struggle that I insisted on its being wrenched off again and thrown to the poor little fellow. To everybody's amazement he succeeded in seizing it, and was actually hauled aboard again. With yells of applause several of the men instantly set to work forcing the buoy over my head again, and lashing it to me more firmly than before.

Matsui, who succeeded in keeping near me, now pointed upward to call my attention to what appeared to be an overhanging cloud of a definite outline, and shouted, "Yama, Yama." It was a mountain-top plainly revealed through the clouds in the early dawn.

But with tons of water pouring over me every few minutes, the pounding, the struggle, the cold of it, which had continued hour after hour, I was so benumbed and exhausted as to be almost apathetic, except to the irony of being drowned in sight of land.

The next thing I recall was a seeming consciousness of being dead, of having been dead for a long time, and of being surprised how well my dead body floated. Excepting my life-buoy, I knew that there was nothing between me and the bottom of the ocean, but my attention and my whole thoughts were now fixed on the over-topping wave next approaching, speculating,

## Prisoners of Russia

wondering, then almost admiring the way in which, instead of crushing me, it picked me up and tossed me on its crest. I had for a moment a glimpse of the shore, thought I heard voices, saw looming to my left the stern end of the stranded hulk, and noted how nearly I came being smashed against it. Once I passed beyond it and distinctly heard tremendous yelling —then I was far out at sea again. This was repeated again and again; then came more yelling than ever—I felt I was grappled. Then came the greatest surprise of my life. I was not dead, but really alive! I was conscious of lying flat on a rock, and of excited men making violent efforts to wake me from what seemed a confused and troubled dream.

From the beginning of the voyage and throughout that terrible experience, not only Matsui Sau and Goto Sau, but everybody on the ship, was so devoted, they seemed to think the ship and everybody else on it had but one intent, one object—myself and my comfort. This devotion was now nothing less than a frenzy. I knew that their frantic efforts were fast extinguishing the flickering spark they were trying to revive, but I could make no sign.

“Death from Drowning. We regret to announce that while travelling in the far East, Dr. Benjamin Howard, the author of the Direct

## From Sakhalin to Yezo

Method of the Resuscitation of the Drowned, died of his own specialty near the Sea of Tartary."

This imaginary notice, the oddness of it, the irony of it, the discovery, which nothing but this experience could have given me, of the danger of excessive frictions, I had insufficiently pointed out, all this passing as if on a screen before my mind, stirred in me slightly chagrin, and slightly a sense of duty regarding this discovery. By a supreme effort I opened my eyes, and made my rescuers understand that I must be covered up and left for a while quite still.

Shifted gently to dry ground, covered with leaves, a bonfire kept blazing beside me, I was taking long breaths within an hour. I felt dazed, amazed, but finally convinced that after all I was really alive.

Like all semi-nude peoples, these Yezo men had their personal vanities. One of these was in the dressing of the hair. This was carefully done in a top-knot such as is represented on some old Japanese screens. The other was a little ornamental sheath fastened to every waist belt, many of which were of ivory beautifully carved. This contained a little pipe, and, fortunately for us, a flint and steel for lighting it. By means of the latter they quickly arranged to

## Prisoners of Russia

make the capital fire which they so carefully kept going.

Some of the men made large, cleverly constructed leaf-huts of pine branches and kept them warm with blazing fires. As the sea calmed down, others of the men, partly floating and partly swimming on loose timbers, succeeded in getting from a part of the Kaoon Mara, still sticking out of the water, enough provisions to live on. What was of most importance, however, was the recovery of a partly smashed yawl boat.

Our situation was this: Where we were certain starvation confronted us. Following the Kaoon Mara, another and smaller vessel from the Kamchatka waters for Nigata was to follow, and should just about this time be passing our latitude. As with Asiatics always, in the presence of an Anglo-Saxon, their eager discussions as to our future always ended in "What does Howard Sau advise?" They all agreed with me as to what was the only course. Working like Titans, they succeeded in outrigging the smashed boat with timbers into a large and solid raft. On experiment it was found that it would carry three persons. It was agreed that the moment the weather was favourable, Matsui Sau, Goto Sau, and Howard Sau should man this little raft, and with our mat-sail push right out

## From Sakhalin to Yezo

into the open sea, on the bare chance of sighting and intercepting the Toyama Mara, the little schooner which indeed might already have passed us.

The second day after the raft was completed was as fine as if it had been created expressly for our enterprise. At earliest dawn everybody was assembled on the beach, each trying to give some finishing touch to the raft.

We were shoved off in silence, broken only by here and there a "saiyonara," and at a beautiful speed headed straight for the sun, just as it was rising above the horizon. Throughout the day sun, wind, weather, all was perfection, but after nightfall the mists were so heavy that, in spite of the full moon, they might have quite obscured again and again any passing sail. The dread of perhaps just missing our object, and what that would mean to all of us, the intense strain of the watching, the solitude, are not for description, but for the imagination.

In the morning a tiny speck on the horizon, growing in size and changing in colour, gradually approached us, and within a couple of hours we were safely aboard the Toyama Mara, with our raft in tow, and making direct for the relief and rescue of the anxious survivors of the Kaoon Mara. One of the first of those to come aboard after we cast anchor was my little cabin-

## Prisoners of Russia

boy, who prostrated himself completely before me, and clung to my knees in his gratitude for the life-preserver incident.

If on the Kaoon Mara I had been treated as a prince, the survivors, as they came aboard the Toyama Mara, treated me by comparison almost as a king. Their gratitude and over-crowding attentions were positively embarrassing and inconvenient.

We lost no time in getting away from this dangerous part of the coast, and, taking the course between Cape Crillon and Nosyass, continued southwest till we came in sight of the towering cone of the marvellous Kiskiri Island, of whose beauty I have previously spoken. I tried to induce Captain Amata Yoshitaro to land me at Obdru, whence I might go overland to Hakodate, but the wind, which was most of the time S. E., was thought too unfavourable for this. Off Capes Shatotau and Mota, we had such nasty squalls that, to avoid being washed overboard, all the men except those engaged in working the ship had to take shelter in the cabin, where we were like herrings packed in a barrel. From Cape Ota, there was only just wind enough to keep us in motion, but the captain was little concerned about it, because he said that we should in any case soon be off Nepia and Lukuyami, whence there was sure

## From Sakhalin to Yezo

to be a strong northeast current, which of itself would carry us right up to Hakodate. As we had passed these places, however, and were approaching Cape Shirakami, hoping to round it and to enter Tsugaru Strait, we encountered a furious gale, which towards midnight became a regular hurricane.

Just outside the mouth of the strait is a volcanic island, which presents nothing but precipitous rocky cliffs for six or seven miles. Its name is Kajima or Keshuma. Except on its western coast, not a blade of grass grows on it, and it is the particular dread of all mariners in this region. The schooner partly rounded the cape, but would not lay her course. We had gone too far to put the ship to the northward by running before the wind; to remain as we were meant that we should be driven in the darkness to leeward, right on to the perpendicular wall of rocks. One chance of escaping this, and only one, remained; that was to try to keep the ship away, pack on all canvas she would carry, and, by going at the fullest possible speed, try to drive past and clear the cliffs before the schooner could strike on them.

This is one of the most exciting and dangerous manœuvres a navigator is ever called to attempt, and is one that taxes all the skill and

## Prisoners of Russia

nerve of the most intrepid mariner to the utmost.

Early in the evening, in view of its being the height of the typhoon season, I had myself urged the captain to steer to leeward of this island and give it a clear berth until the weather then threatening had improved, and he had promised me he would do so. I learned that he had afterward been overruled, however, by a part-owner of the vessel who was on board of her. When it was too late, the danger of our situation was fully realized, the captain, owners, everybody concerned got into a frightful panic, and the vessel became a regular pandemonium. For myself, I was in a state of helpless rage at their stupidity and folly. In the fury of this midnight storm, one sail after another was ripped into ribbons, and the gaff came down with a run, smashing through the roof of my cabin. The topmast was now carried away, and, judging from the terrific noise and fearful commotion that we were about to strike, I tried to step out on deck, but found my way completely blocked by wreckage. With the greatest difficulty I managed to get about three feet from the companion hatch, peered eagerly leeward, and there saw that within twenty or thirty feet of us were perpendicular rocks, the tops of which were at that moment nearly overhanging

## From Sakhalin to Yezo

the deck. There was an awful suspense and a dead silence during the few moments we grazed swiftly past and cleared them. Then followed a general and audible sigh of relief at this narrow deliverance from hopeless destruction.

The schooner was leaking badly, but by the aid of the pumps we managed to keep the water under. With jury-mast and rapidly patched up sail; by slow and tedious tacking, we at last succeeded, on the second night thereafter, in dropping anchor off the fort at the entrance to the harbour at Hakodate. Amid general manifestations of relief and joy, we all squatted together in the cabin to a supper of tea, rice, and raw fish. This being over, good old Matsui, though now only a passenger like myself in the Toya-ma, and therefore without any authority on board, brought out a small portable shrine, lighted the little lamps on it, tinkled a little bell, and from a small well-thumbed book proceeded to conduct a short Buddhist service of prayer and thanksgiving. Every man on board went on his knees and earnestly and reverently joined. Without any disparagement I think I may truly say that, of all persons, heathen or Christian, Matsui, all through these recent severe tests of character, impressed me as being the most Christ-like man I had ever known. Though he

## Prisoners of Russia

did not know the Christ, undoubtedly the Christ knew him.

No company will insure the vessels engaged in this northern trade. In the sinking of the Kaoon Mara, Matsui lost over ten thousand dollars, nearly all he had in the world, yet from first to last he was the same—courteous, calm, self-sacrificing; he was beloved by everybody. On reaching Hakodate, we found that the storms which had struck us had been the two most destructive typhoons that had swept the Japanese coast for many years. In the first the Ertougroul, the admiral's ship of the Turkish navy, the officers of which were fresh from an imperial reception at Tokio, had gone down with nearly four hundred souls. Two large steamers of the Nippon Yusen Raisha had also shared a similar fate. The second typhoon was scarcely less disastrous, and several vessels, two of which we had sighted on the west of Yezo, were reported as lost. To this day, in certain weather changes, I have mementoes of this frightful voyage in the twitching of three ribs, the breaking of which was but a small part of my own personal injuries from it.

Although this account of it may, I fear, seem rather tedious, I have tried to confine myself to details having other than a personal interest. It will, I think, corroborate what I had

## From Sakhalin to Yezo

previously stated about the natural difficulties of escape from Sakhalin; it will also bring into view some of the peculiarities of the hardy Yezo men, from whom alone come the famous wrestlers, so distinguished and honoured throughout the Japanese Empire, and who form such a magnificent reserve for the Japanese navy.

The wonderful phosphorescence in the first storm, to which I had once seen a faint approximation in the West Indian waters, I had thought to be partly due to the medusa or jelly-fish, which I have previously mentioned as so abundant in La Pérouse Straits. I felt that even a moderate description of the vividness of this phosphorescence on my own authority alone could hardly fail of seeming an exaggeration to some readers, so I insert the following account from Lord George Campbell's Log-letters from the Challenger, which will be found to be very similar to my own experience as I have described it:

### “ON PHOSPHORESCENCE OF THE SEA

“On the night of the 14th the sea was most gloriously phosphorescent to a degree unequalled in our experience. A fresh breeze was blowing and every wave and wavelet as far as one could see from the ship on all sides to the distant horizon flashed brightly as they broke,

## Prisoners of Russia

while above the horizon hung a faint but visible white light. Astern of the ship deep down where the keel cut the water glowed a broad band of blue emerald-green light, from which came streaming up or floated on the surface myriads of yellow sparks which glistened and sparkled against the brilliant cloud-light below until both mingled and died out astern far away in our wake. Ahead of the ship where the old bluff bows of the Challenger *went ploughing and churning through the sea, there was light enough to read the smallest print with ease.* It was as if the Milky Way as seen through a telescope scattered in millions like glittering dust, had dropped down on the ocean and we were sailing through it. . . . This bright cloud-light below the surface we thought was caused by fishes' spawn, through a belt of which we passed for two or three days; and the sparks by the larvæ of crabs, with both of which the towing net was full." \*

Elsewhere in his Log-letters Lord George Campbell says:

"At page 39 I have logged an unusually brilliant display of phosphorescence, and on that peg let me hang some general remarks on the

---

\* A mistake discovered afterward. As we unscientific people have all seen phosphorescence in the sea, and have all doubtless wondered what produced it, I have said a word or two on this subject in the last chapter.

## From Sakhalin to Yezo

subject as observed on the Challenger. Phosphorescent light is, as you know, emitted by many ocean-living organisms. Some larval crustacea give out a light from their eyes, some copepods intermittently from between the segments of their bodies; pyrosoma give out a steady lambent glow; salpæ also, and medusa, all zoophytes which live at the bottom are brilliantly illuminated; and, as we have seen, fish of several kinds are dotted along their bodies with phosphorescent organs; while a little infusorian has been credited with so great a light-giving power as to have won the name of *noctiluca*. And that brings us to a Challenger discovery. *What was it that, on the night I have mentioned, was the cause of that extraordinary phenomenon—the Milky Way—the glittering dust scattered in such profusion in the sea as to literally illuminate the dark night air?* The tow net was full of little round organisms which at first glance were taken to be fishes' eggs or perhaps *noctiluca*. But further study showed them to be diatoms undescribed and hitherto quite unknown to science, and so we christened them '*pyrocistis pseudonoctiluca*', than which no ocean living organism, whether plant or animal, is so abundant in the warm waters of the sea. Its phosphorescent light is emitted from a nucleus.

## Prisoners of Russia

"Noctiluca, on the other hand, is not found in the open ocean excepting where the sea-water is from river-water permeation brackish. If therefore when sailing over the ocean, particularly in the tropics, the phosphorescence appears diffused such as I have described, be sure that the bright cloud-light is caused by the diatoms 'pyrocistis,' or 'bags of fire.' And if when pulling over the waters of some harbour or along the shore in whatever part of the world the oars drip showers of stars and the rippling wavelets diverging wide from the bows reveal their crests in running lines of mellowest light as though a reflected moonbeam sleeping had been disturbed, be sure in this case that *noctiluca* infusorians chiefly are the cause, while in either case the larger glittering sparkles are caused by larval crustaceans flashing fire from wrathful eyes, or from copepods from between the joints of their bodies. It is only when disturbed that many of these organisms give forth their light-giving property. You may be sailing along seeing little phosphorescence, the crest of a wave breaking, a medusa floating by, the sparkles caused by the friction of the ship; but should a dolphin, shark, or porpoise shoot swimming around you, lo! as water-fowl are sheathed in water air-bubbles so are the fish sheathed in phosphorescent gold, cutting

## From Sakhalin to Yezo

through the black water like lightning streaks; and thus it was on the night mentioned. The day had been calm, and up to the surface came floating and swimming all things that have life, and among these the diatoms, which happened to be in unusual abundance. Then fell the night, and with it rose the breeze disturbing as does your hand in a glass jar the excitable organisms, and hence the wondrous display" (page 501).

Speaking of some of these organisms in the deep sea, Professor Lars says (page 499):

"The light of day does not penetrate to these great depths, but as a compensation there is produced by the animals themselves a splendid illumination of the whole, inasmuch as all are strongly phosphorescent or have the power to produce from their bodies an intense light by turns bluish, greenish, and reddish. . . . The luminous shark thus attracts its prey on the same principle as torches are employed in night fishing."

Though only of personal interest, I venture to add one word respecting the most critical moment in the wreck of the Kaoon Mara.

Before leaving Hakodate, I met at Matsui's house Captain Goto Sau, the captain of the lost vessel. Referring to his daring attempt, which

## Prisoners of Russia

I have described, to get the top-sail unfurled, and what it had to do with shifting the vessel from the reef on which we were hopelessly impaled, he said that, on looking back, his action was as surprising to himself as it could be to anybody else. The position was one in which he had no experience, either of his own or of others to guide him, but the idea suddenly flashed into his mind, and thinking it was the last thing he should ever do in this world, he made the dash I witnessed, which to his own surprise turned out such a success. "You see," he remarked, "I knew it would be of no use to order any sailor to attempt to do it, so I took the risk myself, and I am thankful I did, because but for just that one thing, I am quite sure that within a few minutes every soul of us would have been lost."

Turning to dear good old Matsui, I said, "Matsui Sau, I saw you pray to your God just before Goto Sau lowered the top-sail."

"And you," he said, "didn't you pray to your God, too?"

"Well, yes I did."

"Well," said he, "all same thing." Raising his hands with the tips of his two forefingers joined together, he said, "Your prayer, my prayer come together so; I Buddha, you Christ; different name but all same, all one up top."

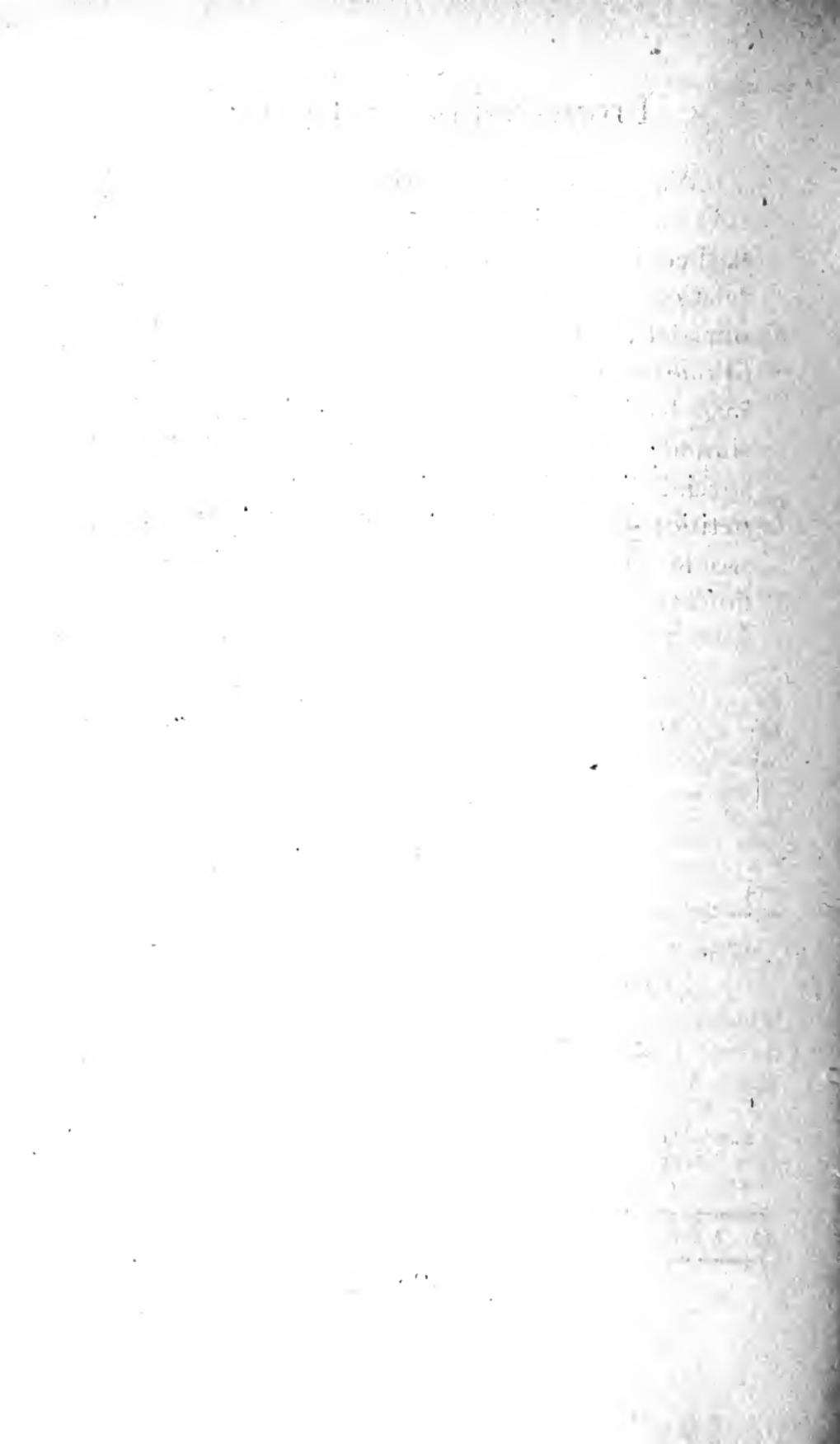
## From Sakhalin to Yezo

Who will venture to say good old Matsui was not right? and that the suggestion flashed into the mind of Captain Goto had no relation to the united prayers that went up for our deliverance? I know that the experience of one man cannot serve for another, but if any man having had the same experience as mine, should still ridicule or doubt the possibility of special divine intervention in answer to united petition, neither his science nor his philosophy would prevent me from regarding him as an unfortunate and an unenviable man.

(1)

THE END





---

---

## By PROFESSOR G. MASPERO.

---

*The Greatest and Most Scholarly Work on the  
History of the Ancient World.*

### **The Passing of the Empires.**

*850 B. C. to 330 B. C.*

Edited by the Rev. Professor A. H. SAYCE. Translated by M. L. McClure. With Maps and numerous Illustrations, including three Colored Plates. 4to. Cloth, \$7.50.

"With this magnificent volume Professor Maspero completes his great task, which has extended over nearly seven years, of writing a history of the Oriental world from the earliest times down to the death of Darius. The work has been great, as the progress of Oriental research has been so rapid, and discoveries so numerous, that to attain any finality seemed impossible; but the author has neglected nothing, and indeed the footnotes to these volumes show an almost herculean labor of research among authorities in every land and every tongue, and add immensely to the value of the work."—*Chronicle* (London).

### **The Struggle of the Nations.**

*(Egypt, Syria, and Assyria).*

Edited by the Rev. Professor A. H. SAYCE. Translated by M. L. McClure. With Maps and over 400 Illustrations, including three Colored Plates, 4to. Cloth, \$7.50.

"A work of comprehensive scope and sound basis, truthful, in the main accurate, and in a high degree attractive. Its abundant maps and illustrations—four hundred and more—increase its fitness for the intelligent public for whom it is designed. Some of them have exceptional value, even for those already well informed. Notwithstanding the abundant footnotes and citations of authorities, the aim of the work is essentially popular."—*The Nation*.

### **The Dawn of Civilization.**

*(Egypt and Chaldea).*

Third and enlarged edition. Edited by the Rev. Professor A. H. SAYCE. Translated by M. L. McClure. With Map and over 470 Illustrations, including three Colored Plates. 4to. Cloth, \$7.50.

"You no sooner open it at random than you discover that every paragraph is alluring and instructive. You may not hope to read it through, even in a dozen sittings, but you can not give a glance at any one of its pages without having your attention specially challenged."—*New York Herald*.

---

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY, NEW YORK.

---

---

# APPLETONS' WORLD SERIES.

---

## A New Geographical Library.

Edited by H. J. MACKINDER, M. A., Student of Christ Church, Reader in Geography in the University of Oxford, Principal of Reading College. Each, 8vo. Cloth.

The series will consist of twelve volumes, each being an essay descriptive of a great natural region, its marked physical features, and the life of the people. Together, the volumes will give a complete account of the world, more especially as the field of human activity.

---

### NOW READY.

**Britain and the British Seas.** By the EDITOR. With numerous Maps and Diagrams. \$2.00 net; postage, 19 cents additional.

**The Nearer East.** By D. G. HOGARTH, M. A., Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford; Director of the British School at Athens; Author of "A Wandering Scholar in the Levant." \$2.00 net; postage, 17 cents additional.

### IN PREPARATION.

**CENTRAL EUROPE.** By Dr. JOSEPH PARTSCH, Professor of Geography in the University of Breslau.

**INDIA.** By Sir T. HUNTERFORD HOLDICH, K. C. I. E., C. B.; R. E., Superintendent of Indian Frontier Surveys; author of numerous papers on Military Surveying and Geographical subjects.

**SCANDINAVIA AND THE ARCTIC OCEAN.** By Sir CLEMENTS R. MARKHAM, K. C. B., F. R. S., President of the Royal Geographical Society.

**THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE.** By Prince KROPOTKIN, author of the articles "Russia" and "Siberia" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

**AFRICA.** By J. SCOTT KELTIE, Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society; Editor of *The Statesman's Year-Book*; Author of "The Partition of Africa."

**THE FARTHER EAST.** By ARCHIBALD LITTLE.

**WESTERN EUROPE AND THE MEDITERRANEAN.** By ELISÉE RECLUS, author of the "Nouvelle Géographie Universelle."

**AUSTRALASIA AND ANTARCTICA.** By Dr. H. O. FORBES, Curator of the Liverpool Museum, late Curator of the Christ Church Museum, N. Z.; Author of "A Naturalist's Wanderings in the Eastern Archipelago."

**NORTH AMERICA.** By Prof. ISRAEL COOK RUSSELL, M. S., C. E., LL. D., Professor of Geology in the University of Michigan; author of numerous works on geological and physiographical subjects.

**SOUTH AMERICA.** By JOHN CASPER BRANNER, Ph. D., LL. D., Professor of Geology, and sometime Vice-President Leland Stanford Junior University; author of many publications on Brazil, Geology, and Physical Geography.

Maps by J. G. BARTHOLOMEW.

---

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY, NEW YORK.

---

---

# THE GREAT PEOPLES SERIES

Edited by DR. YORK POWELL,

Regius Professor of Modern History in the University of Oxford.

Each 12mo. Cloth, \$1.50 net; postage, 14 cents additional.

---

The aim of this series is to give in well-printed, clearly written, and readable volumes a view of the process by which the leading peoples of the world have become great and earned their title to greatness, to describe the share each has contributed to the common stock of civilization. It is not so much a set of political or military or even social histories, as a sequence of readable studies on the tendencies and potencies of the chief peoples of the world, that this series will strive to present.

---

*NOW READY:*

## THE SPANISH PEOPLE.

By Dr. MARTIN A. S. HUME.

"The reader quickly perceives that the riches promised by Dr. Powell are amply found, at least in this first volume. The history is written with a new object and from a new standpoint; there is not a dull page in it. Mr. Hume writes with all the advantages of the modern historical specialist, and his picture of the development of the Spaniard is an important history of a people whose picturesque career is one of unfailing interest."—*Boston Daily Advertiser*.

## THE FRENCH PEOPLE.

By ARTHUR HASSALL, M. A., Student of Christ Church, Oxford; Author of "The Balance of Power," etc.

In accordance with the general plan of the series, this important work presents the evolution of a people. The method is modern, and although the sources, development, and transitions of a great race are fully indicated in a comparatively small compass, the author's aims and results differ widely from the set record of political, dynastic, and military facts which are chronicled in the dry language of the usual hand-book. The part that France has played in the world's history has been frequently so picturesque and dramatic, as well as great, that a vital analysis of her history like this possesses a profound interest. The author is one of the ablest of the rising English historians and a lecturer at Christ Church, Oxford.

*IN PREPARATION:*

## THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE.

By J. FITZMAURICE-KELLY.

---

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY, NEW YORK.

---

---

## A STANDARD REFERENCE WORK.

---

### Appletons' Universal Cyclopædia and Atlas.

This is the only Cyclopædia made in this country by a thoroughly organized body of scholars, writers, and litterateurs, each selected for his special fitness and his acquaintance with the subjects assigned to him. It treats more than 70,000 subjects, including thirty thousand signed articles, and it affords the latest authentic information on every topic treated.

It is the only cyclopædia that gives the derivation, meaning, and pronunciation of foreign names, thus combining the essential features of a lexicon with the characteristics of a cyclopædia of general knowledge.

**CONTROVERTED SUBJECTS.** This feature is entirely new. Editors of the older cyclopædias held that controverted subjects should not be admitted in a work of this kind. The Universal Cyclopædia and Atlas presents the great questions of the day, pro and con, treated by acknowledged exponents of each view.

**ARRANGED ANALYTICALLY.** This is a time-saver; it enables children to use the work in their school studies, and it makes the contents more convenient for ready reference. In fact, it can be used as easily as a City Directory.

**THE ATLAS FEATURE.** This work contains a map of each of the continents, of every important country, and of each State and Territory in the United States; also colored maps and plans of the principal cities of the world, showing location of railroad depots, hotels, theaters, public buildings, churches, colleges, hospitals, etc.

The information in a reference work must be fresh, concise, simple, accurate, complete, and immediately accessible. Every one of these requirements is met by the Universal Cyclopædia and Atlas.

This explains why libraries, colleges, boards of education, and thousands of individuals have bought this crowning success of educational enterprise.

12 extra royal octavo volumes. Prospectus, with pamphlet of Specimen Pages, etc., mailed free on request.

---

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY, NEW YORK.

---

---

# THE CONCISE KNOWLEDGE LIBRARY

---

Each, small 8vo, half leather, \$2.00.

## The History of the World,

From the Earliest Historical Time to the Year 1898. By EDGAR SANDERSON, M. A., author of "A History of the British Empire," etc.

## The Historical Reference-Book.

Comprising a Chronological Table of Universal History, a Chronological Dictionary of Universal History, and a Biographical Dictionary. With Geographical Notes. For the use of Students, Teachers, and Readers. By LOUIS HEILPRIN. Fifth edition, revised to 1898.

## Natural History.

By R. LYDEKKER, B. A.; W. F. KIRBY, F. L. S.; B. B. WOODWARD, F. L. S.; R. KIRKPATRICK; R. I. POCOCK; R. BOWDLER SHARPE, LL. D.; W. GARSTANG, M. A.; F. A. BATHER, M. A., and H. M. BERNARD, M. A. Nearly 800 pages, and 500 Illustrations drawn especially for this work.

## Astronomy.

Fully illustrated. By AGNES M. CLERKE, A. FOWLER, F.R.A.S., Demonstrator of Astronomical Physics of the Royal College of Science, and J. ELLARD GORE, F. R. A. S.

---

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY, NEW YORK.

---

---

## DR. EGGLESTON'S GREAT HISTORY.

---

### The Transit of Civilization

From England to America in the Seventeenth Century. By EDWARD EGGLESTON. Uniform with "The Beginners of a Nation." Small 8vo, gilt top, uncut, cloth, \$1.50.

All who have read "The Beginners of a Nation" will welcome this new volume by Mr. Eggleston. Though it is an independent work, it is also the second in the series upon which the author has long been engaged. Its aim is to reveal to the reader the mind of the seventeenth century man—to show where he stood in the intellectual development of the race; what he knew of science, and how his character was determined by his limitations; his bondage to tradition, his credulity, and the unreality of the world in which he lived, with its witches, its omnipresent devil, its signaturism in plants and animals to guide medical practice, its belief in the virtue of sympathetic powder, weapon ointment, and the fabulous bezoar stone. The standards of conduct of the age are shown, the educational aims and the evolution of a school system unthought of then.

The scope of the work may best be explained by the titles of the chapters, which are :

1. Medical Outfit of the Early Colonists.
2. Medical Notions at the Period of Settlement.
3. Folk Speech and Mother English.
4. Weights and Measures of Conduct.
5. The Tradition of Education.
6. Landholding in the Early Colonies.

This is no ordinary historical work, but a startling view of life before science. No such account has ever been given of the colonists, and no such view exists of England in the seventeenth century. It may be read in entire independence of any other volume of the series.

---

# GREAT COMMANDERS.

Edited by General JAMES GRANT WILSON.

---

This series forms one of the most notable collections of books that has been published for many years. The success it has met with since the first volume was issued, and the widespread attention it has attracted, indicate that it has satisfactorily fulfilled its purpose, viz., to provide in a popular form and moderate compass the records of the lives of men who have been conspicuously eminent in the great conflicts that established American independence and maintained our national integrity and unity. Each biography has been written by an author especially well qualified for the task, and the result is not only a series of fascinating stories of the lives and deeds of great men, but a rich mine of valuable information for the student of American history and biography.

---

Each, 12mo, cloth, gilt top, \$1.50 net.

Postage, 11 cents additional.

**NOW READY.**

Admiral Farragut	- - - - -	By Captain A. T. MAHAN, U. S. N.
General Taylor	- - - - -	By General O. O. HOWARD, U. S. A.
General Jackson	- - - - -	By JAMES PARTON.
General Greene	- - - - -	By General FRANCIS V. GREENE.
General J. E. Johnston	- -	By ROBERT M. HUGHES, of Virginia.
General Thomas	- - - - -	By HENRY COPPEE, LL. D.
General Scott	- - - - -	By General MARCUS J. WRIGHT.
General Washington	- -	By General BRADLEY T. JOHNSON.
General Lee	- - - - -	By General FITZHUGH LEE.
General Hancock	- - - - -	By General FRANCIS A. WALKER.
General Sheridan	- - - - -	By General HENRY E. DAVIES.
General Grant	- - - - -	By General JAMES GRANT WILSON.
General Sherman	- - - - -	By General MANNING F. FORCE.
Commodore Paul Jones	- - - - -	By CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY.
General Meade	- - - - -	By ISAAC R. PENNYPACKER.
General McClellan	- - - - -	By General PETER S. MICHEL.
General Forrest	- - - - -	By Captain J. HARVEY MATHEWS.

**IN PREPARATION.**

Admiral Porter	- - - - -	By JAMES R. SOLEY, late Ass't Sec'y U. S. Navy.
General Schofield	- - - - -	An Autobiography.

---

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY, NEW YORK.

---

---

## TWO STANDARD BOOKS.

---

### Actual Africa; or, The Coming Continent.

A Tour of Exploration. By FRANK VINCENT. With Map and 104 full-page Illustrations. 8vo. Cloth, \$5.00.

"It is really a wonderful book—wonderful, I mean, in the sense that it is the work of one man, for the sum of the information that you have given the public is something prodigious. From what you have said about the parts of Africa with which I am familiar, I think there must be very few errors, considering the multitude of statements, within this African cyclopædia. It is not only a book of reference upon almost any subject connected with Africa, but admirably—most admirably—illustrated. The pictures are a credit to your skill, and the art with which they have been impressed upon printing paper."—HENRY M. STANLEY.

"It is a magnificent volume, containing a large store of information, and admirably illustrated. Even the photographs apart from the text would render it valuable, and with the text it is highly valuable."—HERBERT SPENCER.

### In Joyful Russia.

By JOHN A. LOGAN, Jr. With 50 Illustrations in color and black and white. 12mo. Cloth, \$3.50.

"Of extreme interest from beginning to end. Mr. Logan has animation of style, good spirits, a gift of agreeable and enlivening expression, and a certain charm which may be called companionableness. To travel, with him must have been a particular pleasure. He has sense of humor, a way of getting over rough places, and understanding of human nature. There is not a dull chapter in his book."—*New York Times*.

"Mr. Logan has written of the things which he saw with a fullness that leaves nothing to be desired for their comprehension; with an eye that was quick to perceive their novelty, their picturesqueness, their national significance, and with a mind not made up beforehand—frankly open to new impressions, alert in its perceptions, reasonable in its judgment, manly, independent, and, like its environments, filled with holiday enthusiasm."—*New York Mail and Express*.

"Mr. Logan's narrative is spirited in tone and color. . . . A volume that is entertaining and amusing, and not unworthy to be called instructive. The style is at all times lively and spirited, and full of good humor."—*Philadelphia Press*.

---

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY, NEW YORK.

---

# The Races of Europe.

A Sociological Study. By WILLIAM Z. RIPLEY, Ph. D., Assistant Professor of Sociology, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Lecturer in Anthropology at Columbia University, in the City of New York. Crown 8vo, cloth; 650 pages, with 85 Maps and 235 Portrait Types. With a Supplementary Bibliography of nearly 2,000 Titles, separately bound in cloth, issued by the Boston Public Library. 178 pages. - - - - Price, \$6.00

---

"One of the most fascinating sociological and anthropological studies that have been offered of late to the public. . . . The book is one to be studied with care, and it is a pleasure to commend it as most helpful to sociological students."

*Chicago Evening Post.*

"Will win the approval of all thoughtful readers; and the care, patience, skill, and knowledge with which it is planned, and the highly satisfactory manner in which the plan is carried out, call for the very highest praise."

*Boston Saturday Evening Gazette.*

"One of the most important works of the year."

*New York Mail and Express.*

"A valuable and interesting book. . . . Will attract the attention of all students of anthropology and all its kindred subjects. While it will most deeply interest advanced scholarly readers, it at the same time abounds in value for those not among the learned classes."

*Chicago Inter-Ocean.*

"An important work in the domain of anthropology and a book of supreme interest at the present moment."

*Chicago Times-Herald.*

"Not only a profound sociological study but a scholarly contribution to the science of anthropology and ethnology by an eminent authority."

*Philadelphia Press.*

---

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY, NEW YORK.

---

---

## A MAGNIFICENT WORK.

---

### The Living Races of Mankind.

By H. N. HUTCHINSON, B A., F. R. G. S., F. G. S.; J. W. GREGORY, D. Sc., F. G. S.; and R. LYDEKKER, F. R. S., F. G. S., F. Z. S., etc.; Assisted by Eminent Specialists. A Popular Illustrated Account of the Customs, Habits, Pursuits, Feasts, and Ceremonies of the Races of Mankind throughout the World. 600 Illustrations from Life. One volume, royal 8vo. \$5.00 net; postage, 65 cents additional.

The publication of this magnificent and unique work is peculiarly opportune at this moment, when the trend of political expansion is breaking down barriers between races and creating a demand for more intimate knowledge of the various branches of the human family than has ever before existed.

Mr. H. N. Hutchinson is the general editor; he is well known as a fertile writer on anthropological subjects, and has been engaged for several years in collecting the vast amount of material (much of it having been obtained with great difficulty from remote regions) herewith presented. The pictures speak for themselves, and certainly no such perfect or complete series of portraits of living races has ever before been attempted. The letter-press has been prepared so as to appeal to the widest public possible.

In "The Living Races of Mankind" attention is confined to a popular account of the existing peoples of the world. The various authors describe how the widely scattered members of the great fraternity live; what they do; their habitations, dress, ornaments, and weapons; their religious feasts, ceremonies, and superstitions; their general characteristics, manners, and customs in their daily relations with one another.

The superb illustrations are a new departure, and form a most important feature. They are accurate and beautiful reproductions of photographs from life and they form a collection not likely to be secured again in the course of the coming century.

---

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY, NEW YORK.

---

mila  
140  
not

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

Fine schedule: 25 cents on first day overdue

50 cents on fourth day overdue

One dollar on seventh day overdue.

OCT 10 1947

28 Mar '55 S

MAR 16 1955 LU

11 Jun '55 WS

OCT 26

NOV 9 1970 92

70 -10 PM 6 6

10 Jul 51 LU

REC'D UNI 3 - 1955

Jun 26 '51 J B

17 Jan '56 J B

8 Jun '52 J B

JAN 3 1956 LU

OCT 17 1966

RECEIVED

4

NOV 7 '66 8:30 AM

LOAN DEPT.

MAY 25 1953 LU

17 Apr '54 J B

MAY 18 1954 LU

LD 21-100m-12-'46 (A2012s16) 4120 Due end of WINTER Quarter  
Recall after

FEB 15 '73 89

Hornaid

144166

HV6295  
R9HS

